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THE EXCELLENCE OF CHRISTIAN MORALITY:

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S E R M O N.

To James Clarke Esq.

Sheriff of Edinburgh

with great respect & best wishes



from his faithful humble servant

William Bennett

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THE EXCELLENCE OF CHRISTIAN MORALITY:

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S E R M O N,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND

FOR PROPAGATING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

AT THEIR ANNIVERSARY MEETING,

Thursday, 6th June 1799.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BENNET,
MINISTER OF DUDDINGSTON.

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1800.



SOCIETY HALL, EDINBURGH, *June 6. 1799.*

At a General Meeting of the Society in Scotland for
Propagating Christian Knowledge,

The EARL of LEVEN and MELVILL, President, in the
Chair,

*The thanks of the Society were given from the Chair
to the Rev. Mr Bennet, for his excellent Sermon this day
preached before them ; and he was requested to give his
manuscript of the same, to be printed for the benefit of the
Society.*

JO. KEMP, Sec.

THE EXCELLENCE OF CHRISTIAN MORALITY:

A

S E R M O N.

PSALM CX. 3.

*"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in
"the beauties of holiness."——*

IDEAS of moral excellence are interesting to reflecting minds. To conceive, to delineate, or to extol their beauty, has appeared to such to be a delightful task, and called forth the highest exertions of the powers both of imagination and of reason. But the fancied models of virtue, either of the philosopher or of the poet, when compared with the real standards of perfection which true religion exhibits, will appear, to every candid and unprejudiced judge, to be not only defective but mean. They will even

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shrink into obscurity before the dazzling light which the Sun of righteousness diffuses amidst the benighted wanderings of the human mind. The moral energies and dispositions which the genuine disciples of Christ exercise, have been unparalleled in the history of man, and even unconceived by the highest efforts of human genius. Every age has produced eminent examples of moral worth. But the features of this sublime character were never fully displayed, nor its power extensively felt, before the publication of the gospel to the earth. Such blissful effects of this new institution of divine wisdom and grace, were long foretold by prophets inspired by God. Of these interesting predictions, none appears more pointed, striking, and comprehensive, than that contained in the words of the text. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness."

The whole of this psalm incontestibly refers to the advent, the dignity, the kingdom, and the glories of the Messiah. Not only the ancient Jews acknowledged this general conviction; but even those modern speculatists, who are most jealous of figurative applications, and most attached to the literal interpretation of the scriptures. In-

deed



deed it is impossible for any professed Christian to doubt the position : since not only the apostles, but our Lord himself, appealed to this proof, and silenced their opponents by this authority. " What think ye of Christ ?" says Jesus to the captious Pharisees, " whose son is he ?" " They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David, in spirit, call him Lord ?" " If David therefore call him Lord, how is he his son ? And no man was able to answer him a word *."

But though the general application of this psalm be admitted, there is a vast variety of opinion about the interpretation of its different parts, and of these the labours of the learned have exhibited very different views. It is not our present intention, nor is this a time and place to enter deeply into these researches. Practical utility, and the immediate application of doctrines to life and manners, are more directly the objects of preaching, and especially of such designs as our present meeting calls us to contemplate.

The words of the text evidently describe the subjects, or peculiar people of the Messiah. They

* Matt. xxii. 44. 45.

They illustrate the most distinguishing features of their character and principles. They display the predicted, expected, and now realized superiority of the morality of the gospel. It is with the humble purpose of exhibiting this superiority, and of recommending the excellence of the moral character of our religion, that these words are now selected for our meditations. From their comprehensive spirit, as well as from the extent of the subject itself, we shall be induced to direct our attention to the superior excellence of Christian Morality, in,

I. Its PRINCIPLES.

II. Its EXTENT.

III. Its EFFICACY.

IV. Its CONSEQUENCES.

I. The PRINCIPLES of Christian Morality.

Morality is a term much abused and degraded, not only in common conversation, but in regular and written discourse. It appears frequently to be limited to the expression of some social affections, and to the discharge of some external duties in the conduct of men to each other. It is sometimes studiously distinguished from

from religion, and seems to exclude the idea and the authority of the Deity from its import and application. But surely this notion of morality must appear to be very limited and defective, if the term, as it seems to imply, includes whatever affects, controuls, or regulates the manners and actions of men. To produce these effects, no principles, unquestionably, are so powerful, so extensive, and so pure as those which true religion supplies. Strictly speaking, religion and true morality are in substance the same. In the scriptures, the application of religion to practice is expressed by the term "holiness," and the maturity or perfection of its principles, appearing in the demeanour and actions of men, is elegantly called "the beauties of holiness." To enable us to judge aright in matters so interesting and important, it may be necessary to contrast the common sources of the false morality which the world exhibits, with the principles of that real holiness which the gospel inculcates.

It would be an useless waste of time, to institute a comparison between the principles of *superstition* and true religion. The gross idolatry and depraved manners of the ancient heathens,

heathens, are well known, and have been often exposed. Does not every record and every monument of their history remind us, how mean their conceptions of the Deity were, how various and how contaminating the inventions of their superstitions, how inhuman or impious the professed worship of their gods, how grovelling their conceptions of morality, and how prevalent their contempt of all its restraints? Even when the most favourable views of their principles are represented by the most admired poets of Greece and Rome, aided by all the resources of art, and all the charms of the most seductive language, strengthened by the fascinating power which our early reverence for classical literature has maintained over our minds; is it possible for any judicious and attentive reader to reflect upon the tendency of these writings, and the principles in morals which they display, without some emotions of horror and astonishment? And what system of false religion, though perhaps less gross and barbarous in its appearance, is not hostile to true virtue, and productive of complicated vice? Is it that of the bold and ambitious Mahomet, founded in blood, propagated by the sword, en-

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joining cruelty and persecution, fostering sensuality and lust, sanctifying despotism, extortion and slavery? Is it that of the peaceful and much vaunted Hindoos, depressed by the sway of their proud priests, tainted by the view of their obscene ceremonies, degraded by their superstitious exactions, taught to revere as virtues the suicide of their wives, and the destruction of their parents; habituated to fraud, and insensible to pity for any whom the arrogant distinctions of their casts prompt them to despise as aliens or outcasts? Shall we attempt to characterise the degrading tendency of the superstitions of China, Thibet, Africa, Otaheite, North America, or Peru? The task would be tedious and irksome. They are all strikingly distinguished from true religion, by some strong and irreconcilable features. They are all founded in fear, and nurtured by ignorance. The true religion is established in love, and sustained by knowledge. Superstitious systems either disclaim morality altogether, or teach one that is false or pernicious. True religion regards morality as the chief fruit of its labour, and all its institutions tend to the improvement and perfection of its disciples.

Human

Human laws have been directed to remedy the defects of superstition, or to check the progress of vice. But alas ! how defective and incompetent are human laws to teach or to inspire morality ! The best of them are but the inventions of frail short-sighted mortals, and partake of their unavoidable imperfection. At any rate they possess no controul over the conscience, and can secure no obedience in secret. Their object is to deter, not to encourage, and their highest efforts are to punish crimes, not to reward virtues.

Honour is a factitious principle which has been proudly exalted to supply some of the unavoidable defects of human laws. And what is honour, in the common acceptation of the term ? It is the offspring of pride, fed by prejudice, existing in the breath of popular opinion, openly professing vengeance to be its glory, fashion to be its idol, and an impenitent death its scorn ; devoted to the world, yet courting destruction ; trembling at the frown of fools, yet braving the wrath of God. And can this principle be expected to instil or to foster a very beneficent or pure morality ? Nothing
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but the grossest delusion could induce men to believe it.

If honour be so false a principle, and so poor a substitute for virtue, what then ought to be the estimation of sentiment?

Sentiment, in some degree, partakes of the character ascribed to honour, as a principle of conduct. They are both standards of modern invention, and would perhaps merit little notice in a serious discourse, if they were not so frequently substituted among numerous classes of professed Christians, in the place of religion and real virtue. To expose the error and the danger of trusting in such a principle, as a spring of moral conduct, it is sufficient to remark, that sentiment or feeling is properly nothing but the operation of passion; and that the impulse of passion can never be deemed a safe principle of conduct. Exquisite sensibility often is found in reality to be nothing else but a diseased irritability of the temper, fostered by indulgence and flattery, nourished by the sickly dreams and delusive pictures of romantic writers, issuing in extreme selfishness, arrogating to itself boundless respect, and though affecting to receive all

around with smiles of benevolence, yet too often poisoning the peace of domestic society, and languishing, in secret, under the corroding influence of many mean and miserable passions. What is worst of all in this infatuation, it leads its victims insensibly into a passionate and blind preference of earth to heaven, of the world to God, and of themselves to every thing. They nourish a secret aversion and disgust to the reasonable laws and substantial pleasures of religion, and incapacitate themselves by sloth, squeamishness, and indulgence, for any active exertion of real virtue.

Principles of greater dignity now challenge our notice.

How highly has the *Moral Sense* been extolled, as an infallible criterion of virtuous conduct! But however valuable the operations of that faculty must be deemed, when fully enlightened and justly directed; to what errors and prejudices is it not exposed in the natural state of man? To what perversion and abuse, from the violence of the passions or the force of vicious habits; from partial views, interested designs, ignorance or superstition? How uncertain, therefore, in such a state must its decisions

cisions be found, and how feeble and unavailing its authority !

Reason is the last and the most valued resource, which those who are not willing to rest upon the foundations of pure religion, build upon as a sure principle of morality. If reason, however, denotes that exercise of the mind, by which it examines and compares objects, forms deductions, and foresees consequences, it cannot of itself constitute a firm principle of moral action. It wants both power and materials to raise the moral structure. It wants a standard to regulate its decisions. It is besides ever liable to be biased or perverted by human passions or selfish interests. Under such impressions, the more acute and active this faculty happens to be, the greater must be its deviations and mistakes. How wonderful have been the wanderings of reason, in the history of human wisdom ! How inconceivable the absurdities of her most zealous votaries ! To what extravagant reveries has she not reconciled the minds of men ! And what wild or incredible imaginations have not her boasted sages mingled in their speculations !

Never could the native powers of reason have
been

been more fairly tried than in that bright period of cultivation and refinement, which preceded the birth of our Saviour, and never did the incompetence of reason to discover and to propagate moral and religious truth, betray itself more conspicuously. The ever varying, discordant, and extravagant speculations of the Greek and Roman philosophers, their mean conceptions of the Deity, their degrading compliance with the superstitions of their country, their defective examples, their feeble authority, their incongruous systems of morals, their want of just motives, energy, and end of action, their visible incapacity to reform the world, or to benefit mankind, all concur to prove the necessity and the reasonableness of the Christian revelation, and to display the matchless superiority of the morality of the gospel.

Even in modern times, with all the advantages resulting from the diffusion of the gospel, and the discoveries of science, how ineffective still and incomplete do all the systems of reason appear, whether they be built on principles of propriety or of prudence, of moral approbation or of expedience, of benevolence or of eternal distinctions, of sympathy or of selfishness!

ness ! It may justly be remarked, that modern philosophy has, for a long period, chiefly been occupied with intellectual and metaphysical speculation, and generally avoided the discussion of subjects really moral, as if conscious of its incapacity to enforce them, and tacitly resigning the office of reforming the manners, and establishing the happiness of men, to principles more active, more energetic, and more competent to the task.

In opposition to these insufficient sources of moral conduct, what are the peculiar principles of the gospel ? Religion refuses not the aid of reason, when unsophisticated ; of the moral sense, when enlightened ; or of the eternal distinctions of things, when rightly understood. Nay, religion requires, employs, and retains them all in her service. But above these she exalts, as her peculiar principles of morality,

1. *The authority of an all-perfect Being.*

When the discovery of the being and character of God is once made, when the certainty of a positive revelation from him is once established, when written records of his will are actually placed in our hands, and approve themselves to our understandings and our hearts,
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what precision, what clearness, what authority is then afforded to our ideas of truth and duty ! To be assured that the doctrines to which we are summoned in the scriptures to yield submission, proceed not from the inventions of fallible men, but from the counsels of the all-wise and omnipotent God ; to be warned, that these are not matters of indifference or speculation, but of supreme obligation and everlasting consequence ; to know that they do not merely affect our present happiness, but will determine our eternal condition ; and to be at the same time conscious, that we are dependent, accountable, and immortal creatures : what seriousness, what attention, what reverence, what submission ought not these considerations to produce ! Even into the most unthinking or depraved mind, these truths must strike some solemnity and awe. But to the well-disposed and pious enquirer, what delight and satisfaction shall it afford, to be assured that we are no longer left to uncertain conjecture, to endless doubts, or hopeless despondence, to the fallible and contradictory dogmas of philosophy, to the ever varying and unsatisfying inventions of the human imagination, or to the impositions of prejudice

judice

judice and human authority ; but that we now confide in the declarations of an all-perfect and unerring Being ; and must not only examine, but obey the injunctions of him who is our Creator, our Preserver, and our Judge.

To this first principle of Christian morality, another follows of similar origin, but greater activity ;

2. "*The operation of faith.*"

This is a principle of more general prevalence than is commonly imagined, and of greater moral energy, than is willingly admitted. If the term is simply understood to signify a strong and sincere persuasion, a prevailing and serious opinion, a lively and firm conviction, that any proposition is true, it is the chief bond of human society, and the most powerful spring of all action, pleasure, and hope in life. Its influence in morals and in religion must be no less active and conspicuous. It is, in truth, the chief motive of conduct which Christianity prescribes. Its name has been much abused, but this detracts nothing from its real character. Many counterfeits have arrogated and sullied its honours, which know no better origin than slavish fear, unenlightened ignorance, interest-

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ed hypocrisy, intemperate pride, or mere formality. True faith is the offspring of light, and the parent of purity. It originates in knowledge and in reason. It is cherished by enquiry and research. It is perfected in the free and full assent of the will, communicated by the Spirit of God, when men are "made willing in the day of his power." The disposition to relish, to love, and to practise sacred truth and duty, the power to realise the objects of faith and willingly to exercise its energy, peace and joy, are in the Scriptures affirmed to be of divine origin. We cannot create them in ourselves. They are "the gift of God *." They form the chief excellence, and, at the same time, the strongest source of prejudice against this peculiar principle. Reflection and enquiry will soon discover how consistent this doctrine is with reason, how consonant to experience, and how strongly affirmed in the Scriptures of truth. And if this principle possesses this energy and character, who shall doubt its moral operation? What active and superior virtue must that man display, who believes sincerely the doctrines of the gospel, and seriously labours

* Eph. ii. 8.

labours to regulate his conduct by their influence and direction ! What purity of heart and integrity of conduct must he ever study to maintain, who is firmly persuaded that he is, at all times, in the presence and under the eye of the invisible Deity ! What candour, truth and justice must he ever be prompted to exert, who sees a heaven above, a hell beneath, and a cloud of witnesses, unseen by unhallowed eyes, ever surrounding his path ! What admiration of "the beauties of holiness," and what abhorrence of the deformity of sin, must he feel, who has examined the history of the life, who believes in the merits of the death, and who knows the cause and the design of the sufferings of Christ ! What fidelity in friendship, what tenderness in parental or in filial love, what ardour in every kind affection, what liberal charity, what generous compassion, what active zeal in every good work, must he display, who has himself been "made willing by his Saviour's power," and quickened and ennobled by the inspiration of his love ! What steady patience, noble magnanimity, unshaken courage, and genuine fortitude ; what generous contempt of the baser interests of the world, and what real greatness

of mind, towering above the storms, the vicissitudes, and the convulsions of this mortal state, must he possess, who "lives by the faith of the "Son of God *," who relies steadily upon his promises, and who "looks not so much on things "which are seen and temporal, as to those which "are not seen, and which are eternal †."

An enlightened and rational self-love might, with great propriety, be claimed as a principle of moral action peculiar to Christianity. This, in reality, is directly derived from the discoveries of faith. It is totally different from the self-love which some philosophers have assumed, as the distinguishing feature of their systems, or that selfishness which is so often reprobated, as so prevalent and so unworthy a source of human conduct. These are derived from an unhappy ignorance of real good, from a base preference of the animal to the rational part of man, and of his present pleasures to his nobler, his eternal prospects. The former is founded in a right knowledge and desire of true happiness, in a just estimation of the infinite superiority of the spirit to the body, and of the endless blessings of immortality, to the transient pleasures

* Gal. ii. 20.

† 1 Cor. iv. 28.

fures or pains of the present life. The one degrades and enslaves the mind ; the other exalts and ennobles it. The one contracts and corrupts the heart, the other expands and purifies the soul. The one renders men selfish, covetous, cowardly, base ; the other forms them to be liberal, generous, magnanimous, noble. For by the one, they are entirely engrossed in earthly acquisitions, and dread the loss of them as the greatest of calamities, whilst by the other, they are taught to rise superior to the earth, to set their chief affections on things above, to consider wealth but as the means of diffusing happiness, losses and misfortunes as salutary exercises of virtue and faith, to know that to dispense alms upon earth, is to “ lay up treasures “ in heaven,” that to bear persecution, to endure trials, to behold the spoiling of their goods, is often a privilege and joy, that “ to lose life “ for the sake of their Master, is to find it*,” and that, in general, to his people, “ to live is “ Christ, and to die is gain †.” The one seduces its infatuated slaves from the pleasant and peaceful paths of wisdom, distracts the mind, corrodes the heart, poisons the enjoyment of
life,

* Matth. x. 39

† Phil. i. 21.

life, stupidly counteracts its own true interests, generates present misery, and works eternal ruin. The other subjects its disciples to the laws of right reason, governs them by "the wisdom from above," "leads them in the paths of righteousness and peace," exalts their nature, promotes their perfection, secures their happiness, and "works out their salvation." How irrational and unenlightened is the self-love, not only of the people of the world, but of the pretended disciples of philosophy ! How immoral in its effects, and how ruinous in its consequences ! How widely and how nobly contrasted is that of the Christian, whose entire operation and character is so conspicuously and incontrovertibly rational, moral, and enlightened !

Pure and active benevolence to men, Christianity challenges as one of its peculiar principles.

This principle has been nominally included in various systems of philosophy, but it might easily be shewn, that the benevolence they profess thus to exalt, is neither pure in its source, nor active in its operation. Simple reason, and the light of nature, display the original obligations of this benevolence, but can neither communicate

municate to it energy nor purity in the present
 corrupted state of human things. The gospel
 founds its peculiar and unrivalled principle of
 true charity, in the new discoveries which we
 have shewn it communicates of the true hap-
 piness and highest interests of men, in the new
 views and relations in which it reveals the Al-
 mighty to his creatures, in the new consequen-
 ces of the redemption that is in Christ, in the
 authority of his example, in the constraining
 power of his love, in the operation of his Spi-
 rit, "purifying their hearts to the unfeigned
 "love of the brethren *," in the new relations
 and lights in which it teaches men to regard
 each other, as children of the same Father, dis-
 ciples of the same Lord, heirs of the same inhe-
 ritage, depending upon the same head, united
 in the same constitution, reciprocally members
 of each other, actuated by the same spirit, faith,
 interests, objects, affections, hopes. The bene-
 volence of the Christian is more pure and disin-
 terested than any other; for it acts, not from
 any casual or constitutional feeling, not even
 from the prospect of pleasure in the exercise of
 beneficence, but the impulse of love to God,
 and

* 1 Pet. i. 22.

and the heaven-inspired irresistible desire of doing the highest and most lasting good to men. It is incomparably higher in its standard; for it requires us "to love our neighbours as ourselves*," nay, what is still more arduous and admirable, "so to love each other as Christ hath loved us†." It is incontestibly more extensive; for it includes every duty, exacts every active service, is zealously interested in the state of mens minds, and the happiness of their souls, while it tenderly sympathises in the afflictions, or provides for the relief of their bodies. It is infinitely more solid and durable; for it is derived from God, contemplates eternity, projects and anticipates the final union of its objects, in those bright mansions above, where love animates the songs of the blessed, and associates, in unutterable harmony, the "spirits of the just."

The illustration of these principles, however short and simple, has already exceeded the limits of an ordinary discourse. In a fuller discussion it seemed requisite to obviate some prejudices against the peculiar moral principles of true Christianity, and to display their ample extent,

* Matt. xxii. 39.

† John. xv. 12.

extent. As sources of morality, those which we have previously enumerated, have often been misrepresented or abused. The claim of authority has been deemed arbitrary and ungenerous to ingenuous minds ; the superiority of faith, derogatory to reason ; and the desire of salvation, selfish and contracted. A candid and just statement of their character is sufficient to expose the unreasonableness of such objections. The title of Christian benevolence or charity to be regarded as disinterested and generous, cannot be disputed. Yet this is but the second great law of the gospel, in the order of dignity. That which its Author and Finisher himself pronounced to be the first and the greatest commandment, is superior to all the others in purity and power, and constitutes a principle still more peculiarly and more indisputably Christian. It is

3. *Supreme love to God.*

It is this principle that purifies and perfects all the former, and removes every motive that can be deemed, by the most captious, slavish, interested, or mean from their exercise. They are, indeed, all intimately connected, resulting reciprocally from each other, and forming

ing an aspiring gradation of energy and excellence.

Whoever undertakes, with some degree of candour and sensibility, to observe the works of creation, to trace the government of Providence, or to enquire into the moral and religious counsels of God, will quickly discover such amiable views of his character and perfections, as cannot fail to excite admiration and esteem. Whoever advances farther, and is taught to consider himself as an object of divine compassion, and God as the source of all blessings, whether of nature, providence, or grace, cannot be so irrational or insensible as to refuse to acknowledge the obligations of gratitude. With considerations of still stronger power, the gospel reveals this God as reconciled to the penitent, through the mediation and atonement of Christ, and faith represents to the soul, this "mystery of godliness*" with such assurance of hope, and substantial conviction of reality, as to produce the animating affections of love, delight, and joy. Both reason and the gospel teach, that God is himself supreme excellence, spotless perfection, the chief good, the object of the highest admiration

* 1 Tim. iii. 16.

ration and esteem, the source of the purest happiness and bliss. Faith animates these convictions into action, and prompts the soul, by the bright and realizing views which it unfolds of these truths, to expand its powers in the pursuit, to aspire to the possession of the great and amiable object which alone can satisfy its desires, and fill its immortal capacities, and to delight in the society and "fellowship of the Father and of the Son." Esteem, gratitude, desire, and delight, all thus concur to constitute that disposition of the mind, which is called the love of God, and which, in the Scriptures, to possess its full energy and perfection, is also affirmed to be "shed abroad in our hearts, by the Spirit of God*."

Though some persons may imagine, that this principle is thus exalted too high, they cannot deny that its moral influence must be great. Its obvious tendency is to refine and to elevate the soul, to habituate it to the most sublime contemplations, to assimilate it to the Deity. Its sensible operation is to purify, to impel, and to ennoble the actions of men. Its immediate effect is to plunge the mind into a gene-

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* Rom. v. 5.

rous oblivion of self, of interest, of passion, and to prompt the heroic resolution to sacrifice and devote them all to the object of our love. Its regular and abiding influence is to sweeten all obedience, to render every duty pleasant, to preserve the mind even and unruffled amidst difficulties and dangers, to cast out disquieting doubts and fears, to disarm death of his horrors, to anticipate the joys and occupations of heaven. What principle, in the compass of human motives, can be deemed of higher dignity than this, or more unmingled excellence ! And how justly is it represented as the end of the law, the sum of the gospel, the fulfilling of the commandments, the chief praise of God, and the highest perfection of man !

4. *To live to the glory of God*, is a law which perhaps might rather be called an end than a principle of moral action, though it embraces the properties of both. It is the result of all the foregoing principles combined, and, partaking of their united character, like them, has been liable to abuse, and loaded with misrepresentation. Though they have all been very unreasonably and perversely represented, as irrational, absurd, and even immoral, this,
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in particular, hath provoked a double portion of opposition and abuse. But who that ever pretended to the spirit of philosophy, has dared to censure, as a mean source of moral action, the principle of the ancient Stoicks, to establish virtue as the supreme good, to regard the study of wisdom, and the possession of excellence as the chief end of man? It is this principle, in a higher, in a purer, and, we may add, in a more rational and practicable sense, that the Christian maintains, when he professes to live to the glory of God. To acknowledge and illustrate the perfections of God, is to live to his glory. It is to perceive, to feel, to revere, and to celebrate the grandeur of his majesty, the independence of his existence, the supremacy of his power, the excellence of his wisdom, the spotless purity of his holiness, the inflexible dignity of his justice, the amiable and endearing attributes of his faithfulness, compassion and truth, the blessings of his mercy, the wonders of his love, and the treasures of his grace. It is to depend upon his word, to confide in his promises, to be subjected to his laws, to delight in his friendship, to cherish his love, to prosecute his designs, to maintain and advance the honour

nour of his government, to act, in all things, as willing, faithful, zealous subjects. It is to refer all events to him as their author, and to direct all actions to him as their end. It is to seek all happiness in him, as its source, and to derive all hope from him, as its foundation ; to dedicate life to him, as its cause ; to repose the soul in him, as its everlasting portion.

This is the supreme principle and highest end of a Christian's life. In this all others terminate, and in this consist the perfection of his character, the dignity of his nature, and the consummation of his felicity.

But our leading object at present, has been to delineate the genuine principles of the peculiar morality of the gospel. We are now to examine another important branch of this subject.

II. The EXTENT of Christian morality.

This extent is emphatically expressed in the scriptural term "holiness ;" a term which comprehends every virtue and excludes every vice. Nor is it enough in Christian morality to aspire to this comprehensive union and extent of virtues. We are taught by the language of the
text,

text, that virtue in every form must be carried to its most consummate and most exalted state ; for this is expressed by the “ beauties of holiness.”

The philosophers of Greece and Rome had no conception of such morality. They could not even imagine or invent ideas of such purity. Far less could they suppose them practicable or incumbent upon men. Even in the mere enumeration of virtues, how deplorably defective are their systems ! It is indeed nothing strange, that in all duties which relate to God, to religion, or to futurity, they should have displayed such errors or incompetence, since their ideas of these objects were so obscure or so depraved. In duties which respect themselves, they appear to be almost equally defective ; for they were nearly as ignorant of the real nature of man, of his moral wants, and means of restoration, as they were of the true character and counsels of God. Hence even the most respectable of their moralists, pay so little regard to any precepts of repentance, or to the virtues of humility, meekness, true charity, forgiveness of injuries, chastity of person, or purity of soul. It was chiefly to the classes
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of social and political duties that their precepts and labours were applied. Even of these the extent is but very limited and incomplete ; and the sources from which they spring, when analyzed, are most frequently found to resolve themselves into pride, expedience, interest, or vanity. The theoretical morality of modern philosophers, though sometimes more specious, is, in reality, not more pure, and, in many cases, not even so extensive.

After this simple statement, it must appear not a little astonishing to reflect, that with all the advantages of the gospel, there should exist professed Christians, who discover a disposition to prefer such philosophical morality, above the pure system of their acknowledged Master. Nay, are there not discourses or addresses extant, written by such Christians, which recommend or extol a morality, which a Socrates or a Cicero would blush to acknowledge, as infinitely beneath the dignity of their standard? To avoid robbery, theft, and treason, to bestow a few pence occasionally upon the poor, and to pay a little attention to the external decencies of life, includes the usual extent of this system. Is it not more than astonishing,

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to mark the inconceivable arts by which nominal Christians, of different denominations, contrive to exclude the real morality of the gospel from their thoughts and conduct? On one side, the indifferent, the proud, and the worldly, arrogating to themselves the titles of rational and civilized; on the other, the superstitious and enthusiastical, by whatever name they chuse to be described, equally disclaim and oppose the laws of true holiness. Equally may they be denominated Antinomians. Equally do they confide in dead and implicit faith. Equally are they estranged from the true morality of the gospel. The conduct of one party, indeed, appears to be the more irrational, dishonest, and unjustifiable; because, professing to build much upon good works, sometimes even with impious as well as infatuated arrogance, to make these the terms of their acceptance with God, they yet so inconsistently abandon all superior exertions and conspicuous zeal for their performance. Alas! how hard is the fate of Christianity among such disciples, to be thus "wounded in the house of her pretended friends *," or held up, in the disguise of an unhallowed mask, to the scorn of her open foes!

Yet

* Zech. xiii. 6.

Yet, in spite of the corruptions of men, in spite of the impositions of the world, in spite of the "strong delusions" of hell, there are true Christians still to be found upon the earth. There is still "a people willing in the day of the Saviour's power," steadfast and zealous in serving him "in the beauties of holiness." Do these people, because they profess to love their Saviour with supreme affection, to rely upon his atonement, and to depend upon his Spirit, therefore neglect the social and the relative duties of life? No; they discharge them on nobler principles, to a wider extent, with greater zeal and more pure benevolence, than any other description of men. Some are so blinded by prejudice, and so inaccessible to evidence, that they deny this. But the experience of every day, the testimony even of infidels, as well as the history of the church, prove indisputably the fact.

Social and relative duties are unquestionably of high importance in morality, and politicians and legislators will ever regard them as the most valuable part of religion, because they are most immediately conducive to the external peace and order of states. But shall philosophers,

phers, admirers of wisdom, and students of virtue, pious and aspiring enquirers, extend no farther their conceptions of morality? Let persons of this character prosecute their researches with candour and fidelity, and in the Scriptures of truth they shall soon attain to many new and elevating discoveries. In that sacred volume, does not the great God and our Saviour demand assent, not merely to the common position, that he exists, but require that the conviction of his perfections and presence should affect all our actions? Does he not reveal, not merely his counsels, but challenge an active and universal obedience to his will? Does he not claim, not merely respect for his laws, but zeal for his glory? not merely the homage of the body, but fervour of the spirit in serving him; not merely submission, but confidence; not merely gratitude, but joy; not merely hope, but assurance; not merely desire, but delight in his communion? Does he not challenge, not merely reverence but love? and to prevent the possibility of misapprehension, does he not proclaim this to be his first and great commandment, that "we shall love the Lord with *all*

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" our heart, and with *all* our soul, and with *all* our mind *."

Are not our duties to our *neighbour* taught and enforced in a manner no less extensive and sublime? It is not enough, we are taught, to abstain from injustice; but we must also do good. It is not enough to be indolently harmless; we must be actively useful. It is not enough to perform some good deeds; we must be " zealous of all good works." It is not enough to give alms to the poor; we must study to console, to counsel, to edify, to improve them, to occupy the idle, to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the guilty, to " become feet to the lame, and eyes to the blind," to " visit the widow and the fatherless in their afflictions." It is not enough to feed, to clothe, to tend the body; we must also labour to benefit the soul, to warn the impenitent, to counsel the erroneous, to support the weak, to admonish the unthinking, to encourage the faithful, to cherish the sick, and to soothe the dying. It is not enough to perform these duties to our fellow-creatures; we must study to please our " neighbour for his good to edification." It is not enough

* Deut. vi. 5. Matth. xxii. 37.

enough to withhold the hand from violence ; we must restrain the tongue from rudeness and reproach. It is not even enough to govern the tongue ; we must also purify the thoughts, and banish envy, malice, or contempt from the mind. It is not enough to be outwardly courteous ; we must also be inwardly affectionate. It is not enough to bear injuries ; we must also cordially forgive them. Nay it is not enough to forgive enemies ; but we must also love them. It is not enough to refrain from returning an injury ; we must “ overcome evil with “ good.” In one word, it is not enough to love men in general ; we must love them as ourselves *, or “ as Christ loved us †.”

How extensive, also, are the duties to *ourselves*, as they are sometimes denominated, which Christianity enjoins ? It is not only to renounce ignorance ; but to acquire divine science. It is not only to exercise prudence ; but to realize the dictates of “ a wisdom from above.” It is not only to observe temperance ; but to practise self-denial. It is not only to preserve personal chastity ; but to maintain mental purity of thought and desire. It is not only to subdue envy, peevishness, anger,

* Luke x. 27.

† John xv. 12.

ger, malice, and ill will ; but to attain to equanimity, “ meekness, humility, love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith *.” It is not only to conquer covetous desires ; but to cherish generous designs. It is not only to rise above cowardice and fear ; but to possess real fortitude and magnanimity. It is not only to repress anxiety, alarms, and despondence, amidst the vicissitudes or convulsions of society ; but to live by a “ faith which overcometh the “ world †.” It is not only to meet afflictions with decent firmness ; but even, on some occasions, to rejoice in tribulations. It is not only to cultivate contentment of mind ; but joy of spirit. It is not only to break too eager attachments to mean objects or earthly projects ; but to maintain a noble superiority to the earth, and “ set our affections on things above.” It is not only to renounce evil habits and impure desires ; but to reduce every thought and imagination of the heart, into “ captivity and obedience to the law of Christ.” It is not only to be virtuous ; but to be holy. And not only to possess a general sanctity of mind ; but to aspire to arise to the display of the “ beauties
“ of

* Gal. v. 22.

† 1 John v. 4.

"of holiness." It is not only to desire to learn each of these virtues; but to resolve to excel in them all. It is not only to possess the union and extent of these graces; but to exercise them from the purest motives, to exert them in the most perfect manner, and to direct them to the noblest ends. It is not only to be thus "renewed in the spirit of our minds;" but to be transformed to the spotless likeness of our Saviour. It is not only to imitate the most eminent saints, and to follow the footsteps of the best of men; but even to "let the same mind be in us, which was in Christ;" and "to be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect *."

Such is the extent of Christian morality, such are the demands and spirituality of the laws of the gospel.

But some, even among professed Christians, imagine that many of these graces, and much of this purity, is superfluous and impracticable. They still recur to the grovelling system, which we have endeavoured to expose, and sum up all their faith in a dead assent to the first principles of religion, and limit all their morality to

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* Mat. v. 48.

a few common and external duties. Various are the illusions which are employed to extenuate this abuse. But, perhaps, one of the worst is, when they are so undiscerning, or so infatuated, as to palliate their conduct by an appeal to our Saviour's sermon upon the mount, and affect to be so wise as to deem the doctrines and expositions of the apostles too mystical and abstruse for them. But is it possible to read that awful sermon of Jesus, with any degree of attention, to believe that the speaker's authority was divine, to know that his words were immutable, and not to tremble while we read? What! Is it necessary, not only to be poor in spirit, but to be mourners for sin? not only to be merciful, but pure in heart; not only to be meek, but to rejoice in enduring persecution; not only to hunger and thirst after righteousness, but to press on to perfection *? What! Shall we be in danger of hell-fire, not merely for open acts of revenge, but for being angry without a cause, or simply saying to a brother, "Thou fool †;" not merely for committing adultery, but for looking upon a woman with impure desire ‡; not merely for
 swearing

Mat. v. 3, 4.

† Ver. 22.

‡ Ver. 28.

swearing falsely, but for “swearing at all* ;” not merely for revenging ourselves upon enemies, but for not loving them † ! not merely for unjust deeds, but even for covetous thoughts ; not merely for evil desires, but for not “ bringing forth good fruit ‡ ;” not merely for doing the will of Satan, but for not doing the will of our heavenly Father ¶ ! Must we never hope to be admitted to heaven, except we not only do not walk in the broad way of the world, but eagerly “ strive to enter into the strait gate that leadeth unto life § ;” except we not only do not break the commandments, but except we do all “ the will of God ¶ ;” except our righteousness not only shall “ exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees **,” but except we aspire to “ be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect †† !”

What awful ideas are these of the extent and spirituality of the divine laws ! Is it conceivable, that human infatuation can be so great, as to pervert these declarations, to nourish security, and to palliate grovelling systems of morals ? If “ the light that is in such men be
“ darkness,

* Mat. v. 34.

† Ver. 44.

‡ Chap. vii. 19.

¶ Ver. 21.

§ Ver. 13.

¶ Ver. 21.

** Ver. 20.

†† Ver. 48.

"darkness, how great is that darkness *!" If, at the last, they are to be "judged out of their own mouths†," how awful must be that judgment!

To sober and serious minds two conclusions will appear to arise from the review of this wonderful and appalling sermon. One that it was designed to be a perpetual standard, by which "the Spirit was to convince the world "of sin, of righteousness, and judgment ‡;" and thus to be at the same time an incentive, guide, or "schoolmaster to bring men to Christ ||," to convince them of the indispensable importance of his atonement, of the necessity of repentance, abasement, and regeneration. Another object seems to have been, that it might stand as a model of the extent and purity of Christian morality to every age; and, at the same time, convince men of the necessity of divine power to enable them to rise to the standard, or to realise the character, which it prescribes.

This remark now calls our attention to the third object of our discourse.

III.

* Mat. vi. 23. † Luke xix. 27. ‡ John xvi. 8. § Gal. iii. 24.

III. The EFFICACY of Christian Morality.

It is undeniably of great importance to possess a pure standard of morals ; and the more sublime and extensive it is, the more eminent and admirable will those characters appear, which are formed even by the attempt to reach it. Were there no other argument, this would be sufficient to recommend the elevated morality which we have been contemplating, and to condemn all low and grovelling systems. He that aims his arrow at the summit of the mountain, assuredly will shoot higher than he who only tries to reach the rock upon its side. He who exerts his whole strength to leap the torrent, will infallibly stand a better chance for safety, than he who, by undervaluing its width, and relaxing his efforts, runs the risk of tumbling into the dreadful gulf beneath. Still, it must be confessed, that it is discouraging and melancholy to aspire to objects which we suspect to be unattainable ; to be enamoured of " beauties of holiness," which we can never hope to possess ; to struggle for an elevation, and a perfection, which, in the present state of

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things,

things, seems destined to be for ever inaccessible to mortals.

All other systems leave the inquisitive and well-disposed mind in this gloomy conviction of impotence and despondence. Philosophy can afford no aid, and promise no success to the attempt. Art can supply no resources. Human strength can exert no availing effort, and rise to no considerable eminence. But here again the excellence of the gospel appears. To our wonder and delight we learn that "everlasting consolation" is provided against these sorrows, a sovereign remedy for such infirmity, "grace sufficient" for the task, and divine "strength to be perfected" amidst human "weaknesses*." Nor shall we suffer our hope and joy to be damped by the assertions of designing or insensible men, that the doctrines of Christianity, on this subject, are inconceivable or incredible, that they are mystical or enthusiastic. We know that such hopes are constantly cherished, and that these doctrines are uniformly maintained in the scriptures. We know, for it is clearly affirmed, that a great moral change takes place in every true convert; a regeneration,

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

ration, though internal, yet real ; though supernatural, yet rational ; though wrought by God, yet essentially existing, and conspicuously visible in man. We know that this wonderful change is described as the illustrious work of the Spirit of God. And we know that it is not more incredible from the nature of things, but is in itself much more probable, that spirit should act on spirit, than, what must be admitted, that in the government of the universe, and in the constitution of man, spirit should act on matter. We know besides, that examples of such regeneration have actually appeared among men, that such wonderful works have really been effected, that such moral miracles have actually been exhibited to the world, both in the age of the apostles, and in many succeeding periods of the church ; nay, that sufficient proofs of their undeniable reality exist at this moment, to silence every objection, and remove every doubt. We are assured, even by the language of the text, that there are peculiar seasons for such divine communication, “ days “ of the Saviour’s power,” in which he renders his people willing to be transformed into his
image,

image, and zealous “ to possess the beauties of
“ holiness.”

Neither reason nor prudence require that we should pretend to describe the cause and the manner of this change or moral regeneration of soul. The nature and essence of the intellectual world, we may add, of the material also, is all mystery to man. The very existence of mind, like that of matter, is only known by its qualities. And, like these, the reality of this change is proved by its effects. But these effects are too conspicuous and substantial to be mistaken. The contrast displayed, the impotence experienced, and the energy acquired, are obvious and intelligible to all. It is but too evident, that men are not naturally willing to practise the pure morality of the gospel. And it is unnecessary to expose, far less to seem to aggravate their fatal propensities to vice, to sensuality, to sin. Even in minds the most highly cultivated, and in hearts the best disposed there is felt a secret dislike, and even a sensible opposition to the moral will of the God of holiness, and the divine spirit of his laws. Let reason display the guilt and misery of this rebellious temper. Let eloquence plead, and conviction

conviction attend, still the power is unattained that can vanquish these obstacles. Still that divine energy is unknown, the sweet persuasion and inspiring impulse of a willing mind, to relish, to endure, or to practise these behests. And this energy, the text assures us, is of divine operation.

There are many, indeed, who call themselves Christians, who neither deplore their ignorance of this energy, as a fatal deprivation, nor covet its exercise, as an invaluable blessing. Many think themselves "happy enough, if they know " these things, though they do them not * : " others satisfy themselves with " the form, while " they deny the power of godliness † : " and multitudes have no conception of this willing alacrity of service, and even think themselves secure of heaven, by saying, " Lord, Lord, while " they do not the will of the eternal Father ‡ . " But directly contrasted with this, is the temper of genuine Christians, and faithful disciples of the Lord.

How deeply do these estimable characters deplore their imperfect relish of " the beauties " of holiness," as the chief calamity of their condition.

* John xiii. 17.

† 2 Tim. iii. 5.

‡ Mat. vii. 21.

dition. How ardently do their enlightened and experienced minds oppose these unhappy propensities, and aspire to the acquisition "of a "divine nature *!" How lowly do they bend their broken spirits before their Saviour's throne, and pray that they also may be made "willing in the day of his power."

And when such is the temper of their minds, assuredly such is the answer of their prayers. The arguments of truth acquire new persuasion, the laws of faith new power, the beauties of holiness new charms. A grateful change is experienced in their wills. An animating joy is infused into their bosoms. An unknown vigour is communicated to their souls. Their eyes are opened to behold the "beauty of "the Lord †," and the "wonders of his law ‡." Their hearts are "enlarged to run the way of "his commandments." Their "high thoughts "are brought into captivity, to the law of "Christ §." They are quickened, "made willing," sanctified, and "by one offering perfected for ever ¶."

Is it objected to us, that these wonderful transformations

* 2 Pet. i. 4.

† Psal. xxvii. 4.

‡ Psal. cxix. 18.

§ 2 Cor. x. 5.

¶ Heb. x. 14.

transformations are so rare, and these willing people so few in number? We mourn over the melancholy truth. But these moral regenerations are so rare, and these conspicuous saints are so few, because these doctrines are so seldom cordially embraced, and that divine power so rarely implored, or so openly rejected.

Is it again objected, that while such multitudes profess to believe the gospel, so few should seem to display or to feel this divine energy of its power? The answer is obvious: They do not believe it. They only pretend to believe it. But they neither study, nor love, nor trust in it. They cannot, therefore, understand, nor cherish, nor practise its morality.

Yet though so "many are called, and so "few" seem to "be actually chosen *;" let no man imagine, that the many are utterly unimproved and unconcerned in the gospel. The gospel is, in more respects than one, like the principle of light to which it has been so justly compared. It may be distorted by a false medium, or obscured by the intervention of clouds, yet still it assists vision, still it may be beneficial,

* Mat. xxii. 14.

cial, still it is light, and preferable, in every case, to darkness. Or it is like the element of heat, which, even though unseen, may latently support and invigorate life. Thus even the worst corruptions of the Christian religion, have not utterly extinguished its beneficial tendency. To what but the influence of the gospel is Europe indebted for her boasted superiority of civilization? Why do you no longer behold around you the horrors of ferocious barbarism, or degrading superstition; the impious obscenities of idolatry, and the afflicting miseries of unmitigated slavery; the ravages of merciless cruelty, or the outrages of ungoverned lust; altars stained with human gore, or funerals resounding with the groans of butchered gladiators? It is because, at the commanding aspect of Christianity, these abominations vanished from the earth. Why are infants now no longer exposed to capricious destruction from unfeeling parents? Why are parents now secure from the snares and the murdering designs of ambitious sons? Why are servants now protected from the tyranny and tortures of inhuman masters? Why is the wife now respected in her age, and not capriciously dismissed to make room for the seducing

seducing wanton, or tortured with the insolence of rival concubines? What has exalted the whole female sex to respectability, to deference, and to love? Without a question it was Christianity. It was the gospel that first taught men to abhor these abuses, and still restrains and overawes the most unworthy from relapsing into such enormities. What has mitigated the horrors of war, civilized the manners of nations, attempered the power of the great, and exalted the condition of the poor? It was the same cause. And no system of philosophy, before its appearance, ever produced any similar effects, or ever even attempted such designs.

How wonderful must be the power of this morality, when, even in its feeblest and most perverted state, it can operate such effects! And how astonishing would its energy appear, if it were permitted "its free course," and cherished in its peculiar vigour! If such benefits attend its most defective forms, and its indirect influence, in its more perfect condition, what extensive effects would it not produce, on the state of social, domestic, and individual happiness! But the illustration of these remarks, may be introduced, with greater

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propriety,

propriety, under another branch of this subject :

IV. The CONSEQUENCES of Christian Morality.

Of what importance the prevalence of this morality would be, to every form of human society, it is unnecessary to argue. The keenest foes of religion, are compelled to acknowledge the dignity of the Christian character, and the benefit of its restraints. Legislators and politicians aspire to engross some form of its institutions in their systems, to establish it by their codes, and build, upon its authority, their chief hopes of the order and stability of states. Nations rejoice even in the shadow of its name. Its real influence, and substantial blessings, are not indeed diffused as widely as its name extends. Though communities cannot fail to receive the most essential advantages, from the establishment of Christianity in the midst of them, its peculiar and more exalted blessings cannot be supposed to be indiscriminately enjoyed by such numerous professors. In the present defective state of human things, amid the deplored prevalence of corruption, and rarity

rity of moral excellence, those who exhibit the full energy of the Christian doctrine, or display the living "beauties of real holiness," cannot be many, and must be acknowledged to be "elect" and chosen characters. Such is the moral interpretation of these much controverted titles; and it must now be our endeavour shortly to trace the immediate and final consequences of Christian Morality, to those individuals who are so happy as to be made willing to feel and display its power.

Exemption from the power of sin, and from the practice of vice, is a first and very essential consequence of the reception of the morality of the gospel. Without its influence, life is but an endless distraction, a ceaseless toil, which, instead of being productive of benefit to its possessors, only accumulates crimes, and multiplies sorrows. The mind is enslaved to vicious habits, or harassed by disquieting doubts and perplexing fears. The appetites rule. The passions usurp an unlicensed sway, and tear or corrode, with merciless fury, the bosoms in which they reign. What an unutterable blessing to be delivered from this bondage, and to be relieved from these unceasing agitations!

And

And what power can confer this freedom, but the moral influence of the gospel ! These, in truth, are the first prospects, which, in its reception, it vouches to its followers. “ Sin shall no longer have dominion over you *.” “ If the Son shall make you free, then shall you be free indeed †.”

A willing mind in the performance of every duty, with its attendant satisfaction and delight, follows, as the next consequence, to this exemption from the dominion of sin. It is the prominent assertion and promise of the text. To perceive that our inclinations are no longer at variance with our duty ; to feel no secret disrelish to the truths we profess, and no disguised attachment to the allurements we renounce ; to be “ fully persuaded in our minds ‡,” and resolute in our choice ; to be cheerful in every task, and “ zealous in every good work ;” to prosecute improvement with vigour, constancy, and steadfastness ; and to feel every duty to be a pleasure, a privilege, and a joy : What language can describe the conscious delight that arises from this temper of mind ! “ What triumph can equal “ the rejoicing and testimony of our conscience,

* Rom. vi. 14.

† John viii. 36.

‡ Rom. xiv. 5.

* conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world * !”

The *evidence* thus established, that we are in a state of grace and acceptance with God, is a new consequence and fruit of this invaluable morality. Upon no other presumption can the persuasion of this opinion be founded, than the evidence of our conformity to the standards and precepts of the gospel, the palpable and genuine proof that we are actually redeemed from sin, exempted from its dominion, habituated to holiness, active in virtue, and made willing in a favoured time of power. True religion is in all things consonant with the most pure and unperturbed reason. And in the discovery of this most interesting claim, it teaches us to proceed by the methods of genuine philosophy. We must rise from effects to their cause, and by the concurrence and comparison of undoubted facts alone, we can deduce our real state, and true character. If we are delivered from the thralldom of vice, then we are “a redeemed” race. If we are “a willing,” then we are an “accepted people.” If we “order our conversation aright,”
then

* 2 Cor. i. 12.

then shall we “understand the loving-kindness
 “of the Lord.” If we love the brethren,
 then do “we know that we have passed from
 “death to life*.” “If we walk not after the
 “flesh, but after the spirit, then there is no con-
 “demnation to us†.” If we “have the same
 “mind in us, that was in Jesus,” then are we
 his disciples. If we possess “the fruits of the
 Spirit,” then we realize the power of the Spirit.
 If we display the features of “a divine nature,”
 then are we the children of God. If we are
 “made meet for the inheritance of the saints‡,”
 then may we be assured of the possession of hea-
 ven. If we “give all diligence to make our
 calling and election sure||,” then shall we under-
 stand what is the hope of that calling, and the
 delights of our condition. And if we thus ex-
 hibit the moral efficacy of the gospel, then are
 we elected, chosen, and “predestinated to eter-
 “nal life.”

The *true enjoyment of life* results from these
 principles. Without them all is dark, cheer-
 less, and uncertain. With their support, all is
 light, joyous, and secure. The mind is at peace
 with itself, and all its faculties act in harmo-
 nious

* 1 John iii. 14. † Rom. viii. 1. ‡ Col. i. 12. || 2 Pet. i. 10.

nious concert. Nature expands her charms with new beauty. The Almighty smiles with unutterable tenderness upon his children. Society is sweetened, with new delights, for their comfort. Affliction for them is deprived of its pangs, disease disarmed of its sorrows, and death spoiled of his sting. Every object around infuses joy, or animates to praise. And even in their severest conflicts, or most depressed state, they can yet describe themselves, like Paul, "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things *."

How delightful a task would it be to describe the *peculiar resources in affliction*, which flow from these principles, and the *triumph in the arms of death*, to which they lead! But these are well known deductions, and virtually included in the whole tenor of our argument.

The *preparation for heaven*, which they confer, the anticipation of its joys, and consequently the proof of its assured existence, which they afford, is their last and most important consequence. Nothing is so flattering, and so delightful to the human heart, as to cherish the fond hope of
possessing

* 2 Cor. vi. 10.

possessing a world of immortal felicity and joy, when time shall be no more. And as the Christian religion alone affords any rational, stable, or well authenticated foundation for such hopes, multitudes have eagerly embraced its doctrines, professed its faith, and boasted of its prospects. The learned and the ignorant, the great and the mean, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, as they are all equally exposed to death, so they have readily, in name at least, attached themselves to doctrines, which seemed to countenance the fondest wishes of their hearts. To their conceptions of future felicity, they often add the most unauthorised, fantastic, and grovelling imaginations ; but the worst of all their errors is, that too many of them entertain and cherish these expectations, without any rational claim or pretext of title to their possession, or any sure or justifiable foundation of hope. Reason, common sense, and the very nature of things, might convince every reflecting mind, that there is a fitness required, a meetness necessary, an assimilated character prescribed, a relish for superior pleasures exacted, a preparation for heaven enjoined, which is all of a moral spirit and tendency. And what but
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the unrivalled morality of the gospel, in all its energy and extent, can communicate this high preparation and celestial temper of soul? Does it not appear already to realize a heaven upon earth? Does it not actually anticipate a part of its expected joys? Does it not teach man to wish that he were immortal, and convince him, more than innumerable arguments, that he shall be so? Does it not make him feel his original dignity, know that he is a superior being, and act as "a child of God," as a "joint heir with Jesus," as an associate of angels, and a destined companion for "the spirits of the just made perfect?"

These vast and interesting views of our religion, may confirm our minds in the conviction of some important truths.

1. One primary and invaluable conclusion is, that the excellence of the morality of the gospel, is an irrefragable *proof of its truth*. By this, more satisfying conviction of its divine origin is obtained, than by any other species of demonstration. Other arguments, though just, may be speculative and abstruse; this, by its very nature, is practical and obvious. Other methods of reasoning may be too complicated

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and refined to be readily traced by common understandings ; this is so simple and intelligible as to approve its excellence almost to the instantaneous intuition of reflecting minds, and to form the most powerful and immediate appeal, to the common sense and common feelings of men.

In every country, however unenlightened, and almost in the breast of every individual, however depraved, some latent esteem is still retained for moral worth. In regions more favoured, and in minds more refined, ideas of moral excellence have been formed and cherished, which seemed destined only to exercise unavailing ingenuity, or to mock the fond hopes of contemplative men, with phantoms of unattainable perfection. The most vigorous conceptions of the sage have been exerted, and the most ardent imaginations of the poet have been expanded, to characterise and to paint the ideal beauty of virtue. Their productions have been but pictures at the best, destitute of life, reality, and truth. Though specious and dazzling in their distant aspect, when closely examined, they have been found to be stained with innumerable incongruities and defects. They are incomplete

complete and inconsistent, even in their ideal structure and composition. Defective as they confessedly are, they never have been exemplified by their admirers. And they possess no inherent authority and influence, to communicate energy and animation to their professed disciples. Above the highest efforts of reason, above the boldest flights of fancy, above all that man "could ask or think *," a system of the purest ethics, of the most unrivalled moral excellence, appears to arise from an obscure region of Judea, and is announced to the world, by one of no external reputation nor influence, by one who was "despised and rejected of men." It is not only detailed in simple and persuasive language, but actually exemplified with spotless purity in the life of its Author. It not only appears with superior authority, not only supplies the most cogent motives, and the noblest rules of moral conduct, but is accompanied with a sublime and supernatural power, which gives life and energy to all its precepts. It not only produces its peculiar effects, and displays its superior splendour in one age, or at one particular season, but

works

* Eph. iii. 20.

works a splendid train of moral miracles in every succeeding period, and in every society where it hath been faithfully embraced : miracles, more astonishing and persuasive in their nature, even than the stupendous “ signs and wonders,” with which it pleased “ God to bear witness *” to its first publication : miracles effected in the moral change, and visible regeneration of men ; which no Egyptian sage †, no Grecian sophist, could ever mimic ; which the highest efforts of philosophy could never conceive to be even practicable ; and which human laws and human inventions, could never, in the remotest degree, exhibit.

Can reflecting minds ever believe, that this system could have been the production of imposture or fraud ? Can rational observers ever imagine, that what baffled the skill, and exceeded the powers of the most polished philosophers of Greece and of Rome, of the east, and of the west, to discover or to conceive, should at last stand forth in consummate excellence, as the fortunate invention of a few illiterate fishermen of Galilee ? Can effects exist without a cause, or an all-perfect work appear without an omniscient Author ?

* Heb. ii. 4.

† Exod. vii. 11.

Author? Reason revolts at the idea, and truth bursts upon the mind, in spite of the obstacles of prejudice, and the illusions of error.

Even in speculative and suspicious minds, jealous of the dignity of their reason, and of their powers of discernment, which reluctantly examine or openly reject arguments from prophecy, miracles, human testimony, or abstract metaphysics, the moral system of the gospel must command respect and admiration; its invention and effects must be admitted to be more than human; prejudice against its detached doctrines must be gradually subdued; and every other proof that its origin is divine, must appear to be credible and interesting. Men engaged in unhallowed pursuits, or enslaved to vicious habits, will ever secretly dislike, or openly oppose this sacred system, because they cannot relish its purity, and will not practise its precepts, and because its laws are irreconcilable with their conduct, hostile to their pleasures, and fatal to their hopes. Every benevolent and truly enlightened mind must wish, that a system so consonant to right reason, so worthy of the Deity, so replete with moral good, and so conducive to human happiness, were incontestibly
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and invariably true. He who feels this favourable impression in his breast, and this impulsive desire, is in the best state, and the fairest path, to receive a full solution to all his remaining doubts, and complete conviction of the divine origin and truth of the gospel. In him the preparatory dawn of a "willing mind," hath already appeared, and "the day of the Saviour's power," cannot be far distant. Of him we may cherish the delightful hope, that soon the exalted and unfading "beauties of holiness," may be implanted in his character. It was to such enquirers, that the blessed Jesus himself solemnly promised an internal and complete demonstration of the substantial reality and divine character of what he taught. "If any man will do the will of him who sent me, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I have spoken of myself *."

2. If the morality of the gospel be so excellent, and so convincing a proof of its truth, it ought also to be the *standard of our opinions*, and *chief object of our study*.

Speculative and metaphysical minds regard
religion

* John vii. 17.

religion only as a subject of discussion and debate. Youth is fond of controversy, stiff in opinion, proud of its argumentative powers. Experience and reflection incline us to judge of objects more by their moral, than their intellectual qualities. Such especially ought to be our rule of judging of doctrines, opinions, institutions, forms, and even characters and parties in religion. The moral features of these must ever ascertain their distinctions and their value. "By their fruits ye shall know them*." Every other quality is but as the stubble and the dross, to the fruitful grain, or precious ore. And no other principles, but those which the Scriptures establish, can produce the moral effects which have been ascribed to the gospel, or "yield fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life †." "For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest ‡." Even before the decisive period, when fire shall prove the durability of these materials, the strength, consistence, or beauty of the moral structure

* Mat. vii. 20.

† Rom. vi. 22.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 11, 12.

structure men may have raised, shall sufficiently attest its claims to eternal honours, or its destination to irremediable disgrace.

By the same standard we should judge of the merits of actions, of the comparative advantages of professions, occupations, and conditions in life, and of all the objects of human ambition, desire, or pursuit. With this new and discriminating power of vision, how wonderfully different shall our judgments of these things be, from those which the world so eagerly forms? In the same manner, and by the same rules, shall we be impelled to regulate our opinions of associates in life, and of characters or parties in religion. Where immoral, indifferent, or relaxed manners appear, though perceived to exist in our own church, or in our own society, we shall anxiously avoid their contact or pollution, and regard those who seem tainted by them, as the objects of our tenderest pity, of our most faithful correction, and of our most fervent prayers. And wherever we behold a willing people, adorned with the beauties of holiness, we are called to acknowledge or revere them as the servants of our Master. When the asperity of opposition has subsided, when the prejudices of parties

parties are laid asleep, when the petty distinctions of sects are forgotten, when the insignificance of forms is recognized, then, wherever the features of moral worth are discerned, they will awaken and command our love. The heart will glow with desire to claim such a man as a brother, and "the delight" of unprejudiced and truly noble minds, will be "with the excellent ones of the earth *." With still higher power will the authority of this standard be applied to our own personal character and pursuits. When the romances of philosophy have satisfied the mind, the inventions of science have lost their novelty, the productions of art their allurements, the illusions of controversy their interest; when ambition has been moderated by disappointment, pride humbled by repeated falls, pleasure checked by disgust, passion overawed by fear, exhausted by its own excess, or disciplined by experience; when the operation of domestic attachments has softened the bosom, or repentant reflection broken the spirit, then the moral resources and delights of the gospel will appear to be alone desirable, and "the beauties of holiness" alone to be lovely in our eyes. To possess these will become

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* Psal. xvi. 3.

the highest ambition, and the sweetest solace of life. In every situation, indeed, it must be evident, that in proportion as the intellectual and moral powers acquire their just ascendancy over the animal and material principles in the constitution of man, as the exercise of reason is more purely and unpervertedly directed, as "the Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind*," more freely and more forcibly acts, so much higher, more ardent, and more persevering, will be our esteem, admiration, and study of the morality of the gospel. But to revere and admire, or even actually to possess what is so essentially necessary to human happiness, will not satisfy the benevolent or truly pious mind. It will appear to such to be a new and indispensable obligation to promote the diffusion of such blessings.

3. In the last place, therefore, if we sincerely esteem and admire the morality of the gospel, we shall eagerly *labour to propagate and promote its influence.*

It would be a very contracted and selfish temper in any persons, when prosperous, happy, and rich themselves, even to their utmost wish, to display no concern for others, to express no sympathy

* 2 Tim. i. 7.

sympathy with their less favoured and more destitute neighbours. But the Christian, of all characters, is the most compassionate and liberal, the most "ready to distribute, and willing to communicate *." Happily, also, his most precious wealth is of a species, which, like the useful element of fire, is not diminished by being imparted, but increased. The ardour of his zeal, the vigour of his charity, the strength of his principles, the moral influence of his best affections, are all expanded, increased, and confirmed by every attempt to communicate their energy to others. And what peculiar and constraining motives does he possess, to incite him thus to labour to diffuse the blessings he hath himself been taught to prize so highly! What encouragement and satisfaction, even in the smallest success of his exertions! And how various, interesting, and efficacious are the methods by which he is directed in the word of God, or invited by his Providence, thus to advance the interests of his kingdom, and the glory of his name! How sincerely ardent will he become in the pursuit of these objects, whether it may be by his admonitions or encouragement,

* 1 Tim. vi. 18.

ment, by his influence or authority, by his prayers or entreaties, or by the still more persuasive eloquence of a pure and beneficent example ! Who is so weak or depressed, as not thus to command the power of becoming an unspeakable blessing to the place where he lives ? Who is so obscure or destitute as not thus to enjoy the means of communicating incalculable good to his companions around him ?

In truth, it is only by the moral efficacy of the gospel, and by the influence of the attractive beauties of holiness in its followers, that its doctrines and authority will ever be successfully propagated on the earth. And nothing constitutes so fatal an obstacle to its progress, as the vices, immorality and inconsistencies of its pretended disciples.

Yet, besides the personal influence and exertions of real Christians, God, by his grace and providence, hath supplied additional methods to promote the diffusion of its blessings.

“ He gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ;

“ and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and

“ teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the

“ work of the ministry, and for the edifying of

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" the body of Christ *." The importance, the utility, and the influence of these offices and institutions, are unquestionably great, and admirably adapted to the wants and interests of human society. To extend and promote their effects, subordinate offices and plans have been devised, in regular consistence with the spirit of the gospel, and in compliance with the wishes of its ardent and sincere friends. And to support and establish these in remote, inhospitable, or unprovided lands, associations have been formed, contributions raised, and pious donations voluntarily offered. It may be easily conceived how useful, and even necessary, these must be in the present state of human society, and of religion itself, if such plans are conducted by prudent, disinterested and faithful men. And no such association, assuredly, has a higher claim to these titles, than *The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, whether you regard its constitution, or the characters and labours of those who preside over its direction.

To Christians, it is sufficient to recommend the object of such an institution, to remind them,

* Eph. iv. 11, 12.

them, that it is to dispel ignorance, to diffuse the knowledge of the gospel, to "put an end to sin," to oppose the formidable progress of irreligion, immorality and vice, to "turn men from the kingdom of Satan, to the kingdom of light," to incite them to prosecute and display the "beauties of holiness," to instil the laws of God, to "win souls to Christ," to elevate them with unspeakable joy, even upon the earth, and to prepare them for everlasting happiness in the mansions of heaven.

To worldly characters, who unhappily may think themselves not so deeply interested in these objects, we might employ different incentives of charity; to the force of which none can be utterly insensible at any period, and all are feelingly active in the present times. We should remind such characters, that the diffusion of true religion tends, beyond all other means, to civilize the people, to ensure social peace, to maintain durable order, to strengthen the authority of the laws, so limited and impotent in themselves, to dispel anarchy and barbarism, and to instil and foster tranquillity, concord, contentment, beneficence, comfort and prosperity. We might desire them to look
around

around them, to the consequences of ignorance and irreligion, among the peasantry of unhappy Ireland, and to mark the effects of the same fatal causes, in blood-stained France. If zeal for religion, then, has little power to move such minds, at least let concern for their own interest, regard to the peace of their country, and some attachment to the order and happiness of society, incite them to the liberal support of institutions and plans, which afford the most rational and effectual means to secure these benefits.

But I trust we are all sensible, to much higher, to much more effective principles. Such motives have impelled many estimable characters to devote a part of their wealth, or the active exertions of their labours, to promote the objects of this Society. To you who have not had the pleasure to be personally occupied in these beneficent undertakings, an opportunity is now presented, to embrace the privilege, to enjoy the honour, of concurring in advancing their high design. Do you prize justly the morality of the gospel? Do you acknowledge its obligations? Do you cherish the generous fervour which it inspires? Does it prompt you to wish to communicate, to extend, to kin-

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die, this noble ardour in all around you? Are
 you thus "willing, in the day of the Saviour's
 power, and zealous to serve him in the beauties
 of holiness?" Do you languish for opportunities
 of displaying the fervour of your love, and the
 activity of your zeal? Behold they solicit your
 attention, and loudly call for your support.
 Give place to the dictates of your zeal; and
 yield to the suggestions of your charity. "Make
 friends of the mammon of unrighteousness."
 And, according to your circumstances, conse-
 crate cheerfully, a part of your superfluous
 stores, to the service of religion. Remember,
 that zeal that is not beneficent is false, that
 "faith which works" not "by love," is dead,
 that charity in word only, and not in deed, is
 a mockery of God; that "a people" not "wil-
 ling," are a people not redeemed, and that even
 holiness, if it could exist, without liberality and
 mercy, would be destitute "of power," and
 stripped of all "beauty." Remember that God
 loveth "a cheerful giver," that "they that sow
 sparingly, shall reap sparingly," that "it is more
 blessed to give than to receive;" and that "they
 that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the
 firmament,

“firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever *.”

Where prosperity and affluence are possessed with such sentiments, liberal donations will cheerfully be devoted to such beneficent ends. And if genuine piety inspires and hallows such benefactions, the most active support, the most animating encouragement, and most fervent prayers, will accompany their destination.

How vast, sublime, and constraining, are the motives which should impel the Christian thus ardently to promote every prudent and enlightened plan to diffuse the pure doctrines, and the moral influence, of the gospel of his Saviour! It is not merely their temporal advantages, but their eternal consequences, that he contemplates. It is not the present convenience of his brethren alone that he seeks, but their immortal felicity. The prosperity of his country, however dear, the honour of his church however respected, the propagation of his peculiar creed, however revered, do not limit nor confine his benevolent designs. With an ex-

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* Dan xii. 3.

panded heart and enlightened soul, he can embrace the widest and the best interests of his kind. He looks with delight to the spiritual improvement and moral regeneration of men of everykindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Confiding in the promises of God, and listening to the sweet suggestions of charity, his soul exults in the prospect of the conversion of nations, and the salvation of a world. Whatever darkens this prospect, humbles and afflicts him. Whatever promises to advance or realise it, animates and rejoices his heart. And in such a cause, "whatever his hands find to do, he doth with all his might *."

Of such characters, the actions accord with their principles; their alms accompany their prayers in memorial before God. With these alms let us now cheerfully contribute; and in these prayers let us fervently unite.

Oh righteous and merciful Father! Let "thy kingdom come, and thy will be done upon earth." In thy liberal compassion, enlighten, elevate and bless mankind. Dispel the crimes and the woes of ignorance, superstition and sin. Discomfit delusion and error. Establish integrity and truth. Repel and remove the degrading,

* Eccles. ix. 10.

grading, barbarous and inhuman ravages of infidelity, anarchy and licentiousness. Inspire and maintain the dictates of order and peace, of faith and charity. Enlighten the nations. Extinguish their enmities. Diffuse amidst them the holy laws and the divine energy of the gospel. Shed them abroad in our own hearts, and call them into active exercise in our lives. And in every attempt, in every institution, in every plan, devised to promote the knowledge of thy will, and to extend the blessings of thy kingdom, let wisdom from above direct, let divine grace animate, and the "spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind," govern our exertions. Thus, not only in our native land, but in every habitable country, let "the light of the Gentiles arise;" the Messiah go forth "with the rod of thy strength," and "the sceptre of his righteousness*," "to rule in the midst of thine enemies†", "to judge among the heathen;" and to become "salvation to the ends of the earth." Let "men be blessed in him; all nations call him blessed‡;" and let "the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen."

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* Psal. cx. 2.

† Ver. 6.

‡ Psal. lxxii. 17. 19.



APPENDIX.

SOCIETY-HALL, FEBRUARY 1800.

THE DIRECTORS of the Society have all along considered it to be their duty, from time to time, to lay before the Public, an account of their management and transactions.

In the year 1796, a full "*Account of the Funds, Expenditure and General Management of the Affairs of the Society*," was published, of which many copies still remain; and the Directors request, that any Gentleman wishing for information on the subject, will send for a copy to the Secretary or Clerk.

The information contained in that pamphlet was so full, that the Directors were unwilling, for some years afterwards, to obtrude their affairs upon the notice of the Public; the more especially as nothing remarkable had occurred. But now, after so long an interval, lest it should be suspected, that the Directors have forgotten their responsibility to their Benefactors and the Public at large, they have resolved to lay before them a succinct

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account of such principal occurrences, in their affairs and management, as have taken place since that publication.

In general, the Public may rest assured, that the business of the Society is carried on with uniform diligence, and with a rigorous attention to the design and rules of the Institution ;—and, in particular, that the whole of the funds placed under their disposal, are sacredly devoted to the objects to which they were destined by the liberal Donors.

Of the confidence of the Public in their management, they have had a variety of proofs since the date of their last publication, though not indeed to the magnificent amount of some former benefactions.

In the year 1796, in consequence of an enquiry carried on by Messrs Coutts and Company of London, at the desire of the Directors, they informed them, that they had discovered the dividends due on a sum, bequeathed in the three *per cent.* government stock, to the Society, amounting then, in capital and interest, to L. 1147.

At the close of the same year, the Treasurer of the Society received a letter from Mr Dingwall Fordyce, Advocate in Aberdeen, informing him that a legacy of *one hundred pounds* Sterling had been left by Mr Johnston, late minister of Crimond, in the presbytery of Deer, and shire of Aberdeen, to be life-rented by his widow, and payable upon her death.

In 1798, the Directors were informed of the death of Mrs Margaret Mitchell, who life-rented a house on the High Street of Edinburgh, disposed to the Society and the Orphan Hospital, equally, by the late Rev. Thomas Davidson, minister of a Dissenting congregation at Braintree in Essex, which house is let, on a lease of twelve years from Whitsunday 1795, at L. 14 *per annum*.

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In the same year, the Secretary was informed, by a letter from the Rev. Dr Trotter, of London, who has long been a member, and zealous friend of the Society, that in consequence of the death of Mrs Mary Alcock, a legacy of *three hundred pounds* in the *three per cent.* consolidated annuities, had fallen to the Society by the will of a Mrs Oswald of Bath. An investigation into this matter having been immediately set on foot by a solicitor at London employed by the Society, their right to that sum was established, and the same was transferred to the Treasurer for their benefit.

Dr Trotter, at the same time, gave information of a will by a Mr David Hendrie, in favour of the Society, bequeathing to them the one half of his estate, failing of his niece Mrs Edith Marshall, and her children without having attained to the age of twenty-one years. But whether the Society shall derive any benefit from this will, remains to be ascertained.

In 1797, the Directors were informed, that by the will of Miss Christian Gordon, *fifty pounds* had been left to the Society;—and since that time, that by the will of the late Right Honourable Lady Charlotte Erskine, of pious and most respectable memory, the sum of *two hundred pounds* is bequeathed to the Society, in certain events, which, however, have not as yet taken place.

The only other benefaction of consequence, which the Directors think it incumbent upon them to mention to the Public, is one, of which as yet they have received only a small part. By the will, formally intimated to them, of a venerable and worthy clergyman of the Church of Scotland, in a Northern county, and now in a very advanced period of life, a considerable sum is to be left to the Society, upon certain conditions, corresponding with the objects

objects of the Institution, which, if the will shall be left executed in the form which he has described, shall with scrupulous fidelity be fulfilled.

Such are the benefactions, or intended benefactions, which the Directors think it their duty publicly and gratefully to acknowledge.

Smaller donations they cannot particularly mention, without giving offence to those who have bestowed them; but the Donors may rest assured, that while they are faithfully devoted to the objects for which they were given, so they are thankfully remembered by the Directors.

Having paid this tribute of gratitude to their benefactors, the Directors shall next give the outline of the most important of their transactions since their last publication.—They begin with what regards America.

And first, with respect to Moor's Indian School, a short account of which, and of the Society's proceedings concerning it, is given in the pamphlet, page 60, above referred to, the Directors are sorry to be obliged to state, that although they have had repeated demands for money from Dr Wheelock, (son of the founder of the school, and President of the college of Dartmouth, in New Hampshire, with which that school has been incorporated), yet as they have had no evidence that any alteration for the better has taken place, in the circumstances of the school, or that the original purposes of its institution are in any respect carried on, they find themselves obliged to refuse payment of these demands. The capital sum collected, still remains untouched in their hands,—they feel it burdensome, and wish earnestly that they were enabled to bestow it in the manner, and for the object originally intended; but till Moor's
Indian

Indian School shall be opened for the reception and education of young men, *destined to be missionaries or school-masters among the Indian tribes*, their engagement to the Public forbids them to transmit any part of the money to the President of Dartmouth college.

The Rev. *Mr Sargeant*, who has been long employed by the Society as missionary to the Oneida Indians, still continues in that office, and as they have reason to believe, from the reports and journals regularly transmitted to them, useful and respected.

Mr Kirkland, long their able and highly respected missionary to the Indians, they are sorry to mention, found himself obliged, from bad health, and other circumstances, to discontinue his office for two years, and during that period his salary was withdrawn. He has, however, lately written to the Directors, that his health being in a great measure restored, and his situation now admitting of it, he wishes again to resume his office, and to return to his connection with the Society. It will give singular pleasure to the Directors to find themselves enabled to accept of this offer, by reports on that subject from their corresponding board at Boston, which they anxiously look for, but which they have not as yet received.

The Directors having long been of opinion, that to invest such of the funds of the Society as are laid out on bonds, particularly personal bonds IN LAND, whenever opportunities of advantageous purchases should offer, and having requested *Dr Bryce Johnston*, minister of Holywood, in Dumfries-shire, (in whose judgment in these matters, as well as attachment to the interest of the Society, they have unlimited confidence), to be upon the look-out for this purpose, that Rev. gentleman, in 1796, informed them of the sale, then approaching, of

Threave-

Threave-grange, an estate in the stewartry of Kirkcudbright; gave them a minute description of it, and stated the sum which the Society might give for it, with the prospect of advantage.—The Directors approved of the plan, and gave instructions to their Treasurer, Alexander Duncan, Esq. to inspect the title-deeds, and progress of writs, and after being satisfied as to these, to conclude a bargain for that estate, upon the terms specified by Dr Johnston.

The Treasurer faithfully and prudently fulfilled the instructions given him, and at length concluded the bargain for the estate, at the price of L. 11,600.

The Directors, fully satisfied with this transaction, ordered the price to be paid, first from the money due to the Society, by *personal* bonds, and then by certain equal proportions of those that were *heritable*.

But in this they found unexpected and very great difficulty. The state of the country at that time, rendered the raising of money, by *many* of their debtors, absolutely impracticable, and payment of the price at the time stipulated became impossible.

It is unnecessary to trouble the Public with a recital of the perplexities in which the Directors found themselves involved in consequence, or to state the various means, not excepting even *personal securities*, which some of their officers were obliged to give. Suffice it to say, that the purchase-money was paid, the rights extended, and the Society fully invested in the property, which they have every reason to believe will, ere long, afford a considerable addition to their funds.

But they cannot pass over this part of the subject, without expressing their sense of the very great obligations which the Society lie under to *Dr Bryce Johnston*, whose generosity is no less eminent than his skill and activity,

activity, for the trouble which he has taken, in having not only personally visited the several estates which the Society have purchased within these few years ; but also for uplifting the rents, letting the farms, directing the improvements, and, in a word, conducting the whole business of the estates of Glenriddel and Threave-grange, without any fee or emolument whatever.

The resolution formed, and the directions given, for printing a new edition, of 20,000 copies, of the Gaelic translation of the New Testament *, by the late Reverend and worthy Mr Stuart of Killin, revised and corrected by his son, the Rev. Dr Stuart of Luss, have been executed, and for three years past that work has been in circulation, to the edification and comfort of those who understand that language. The expence of this work amounted to the sum of L. 882 : 4 : 9.

The Directors having been at the expence of printing so very large an impression of the New Testament in Gaelic, it occurred to them, that it would be a great improvement, were the Psalms of David, in *Gaelic metre*, to be annexed to each copy. But they found, on enquiry, that different versions of these Psalms are used in public worship, in different parts of the Highlands. That in the Synods of Argyll and Glenelg, a late translation, by Dr Smyth of Campbelton, is chiefly in use ; while, in the Highlands of the counties of Perth, Inverness, Ross, Sutherland, and Caithness, the old one by Macfarlane, is in use. To accommodate the schools on their establishment, in the former districts, the Directors purchased a considerable number of copies of Dr Smith's translation, but finding that the old version was most acceptable, in the far greater part of the Highlands, they resolved

* See Account of the Society, 1796, p. 51.

resolved to take it for the ground-work of the one to be printed by them.

Having consulted many good judges however, as to the merit of that version, they learned from their unanimous testimony, that although it has great merit, and is truly poetical, yet that many harsh lines, and many words and modes of expression not so much *Gaelic* as *Irish*, occur in it, and that some alterations and corrections are absolutely necessary. They therefore sent interleaved copies of that version to Dr M'Leod, minister of Harris, to Mr Fleming, minister of Kirkcaldy, and to Mr Stewart, minister of Mouline, requesting of them to point out the emendations which might severally occur to them:—and in the end, the whole was put under the care of Mr Stewart, of Mouline, who, after much pains, and with the taste and skill in that language, which he is well known to possess, sent them a copy prepared for the press. *Twenty thousand* copies are ordered to be printed, and the work is now going on.

With respect to the third volume, or the poetical books of the Old Testament, the Directors sincerely regret, that they cannot, *even yet*, have the pleasure of announcing to the Public, that the work is finished. They can, however, state that the books of Job, and of the Psalms, (in a prose translation), are printed; that the book of Proverbs is in the press, (5000 extra copies of which are ordered to be printed for the use of their schools); and that the other books will follow as expeditiously as the extreme solicitude, and well known attention, of the Reverend translator to accuracy, will permit. The uncommon excellence of the work, in the opinion of competent judges, will atone to the Public, it is hoped,

ped, for the extreme dilatoriness with which it has been conducted.

The latest edition of the spelling book, formerly used in the schools of the Society, composed by Mr Giles Kerr, being exhausted, and a supply urgently called for, the Directors were of opinion, that many improvements might be made upon it, or a new work of a similar kind composed for their schools. To accomplish one or other of these objects, they employed Mr Thomas Ross, teacher in Edinburgh, who, instead of revising and improving the former, composed an entirely new spelling-book, the plan and execution of which gave them great satisfaction, and an impression, to the extent of 10,000 copies, was ordered to be printed, at the expence of L. 180 : 13 : 6.

In summer 1796, the Secretary, in pursuance of the plan which had been adopted, of his visiting in person the schools of the Society, set out upon a journey to Lord Reay's country, where the Society have established a mission, besides a variety of schools. As the report of that journey serves to convey some idea of that remote country, the Directors are persuaded that a short abstract of it will not be unacceptable. This journey he found the most fatiguing and unpleasant of any he had made in the service of the Society. The weather proved to be uncommonly bad for that season of the year; for twelve weeks in succession, there was not one day, without rain, in that part of Sutherland; and that country, totally destitute of roads, and at all times boggy, except on its numerous rocks and hills, was then, in great measure, a marsh.

Having travelled by the way of Fort George and Tain, and crossed the two ferries at the head of the Firth

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of Dornoch, and experienced the hospitality of the worthy proprietor of Skibo *, where deluges of rain detained him for some days, he travelled to *Lairg*, in the heights of Sutherland.—There, in the house of the venerable Mr Mackay, minister of the parish, he was met, according to appointment, by Major Mackay, Tackfman of Eriboll, who not only undertook to be his guide, but brought him horses fit for travelling through the country, which his own were not, and were therefore left behind.

Even with these horses, however well accustomed to the country, the progress through it was not a little difficult. The course, (for roads there were none, not even a path marked out by foot-steps), lay either over rocks amidst large loose stones, or over the tough surface of moss, in some places ten or twelve feet deep, or in the beds of rivulets, which had washed away the moss, and thus furnished a firm bottom. In pursuing this course, the traveller, in order to keep somewhat in a straight line, is obliged to ride very much in water. A gentleman, who accompanied the Secretary, and who had been at pains to count, remarked that they had crossed one rivulet no less than four-and-twenty times in the space of an hour. But when they entered upon the wide and pathless morasses, Major Mackay, to whom the whole country is perfectly known, had the goodness to ride considerably a-head of the company, and carefully to explore the course which they could in safety pursue. After twelve hours riding through such ways, and under an almost continued rain, late at night they reached the hospitable dwelling of their conductor, where every thing comfortable was furnished to them. Here were the Secretary's head-quarters for several days; during which he was employed, when the weather would at all permit, in exploring the country round, examining schools,

* George Dempster of Dunichen, Esq.

schools, attending to stations where new schools were solicited, and in visiting the situation and accommodations of the missionary, lately appointed by the Society for the benefit of this part of the country. His charge is a most important and peculiarly difficult one. It consists of three different districts of as many parishes, viz. *Durness*, *Edracbyllis*, and *Tongue*, and contains about 1500 souls. His residence is at *West-moine*, or *Eriboll* on the side of the Loch, or arm of the sea, known by the name of *Loch Eriboll*, where he has a dwelling-house and offices, a croft of land, furnished by some neighbouring tacksmen, among whom Major Mackay bore the chief expence. There too is a chapel or place of worship, built and decently fitted up by the same persons, where the missionary officiates two Sabbaths, out of four, to a numerous congregation. The third Sabbath he goes to *Edracbyllis*, at the distance of about eighteen miles, which it is impossible to *ride*, owing partly to the extreme steepness of a hill which he must cross, and partly to bogs which lie in the way, and which will not bear the weight of a horse. The fourth Sabbath he officiates at *Melness*, the district assigned to him, in the parish of *Tongue*, and lying upon the west side of the arm of the sea, called *Loch Tongue*. This loch, which separates the district of *Melness* from the parish church, the people cannot cross in stormy weather, nor have they at any time a number of boats sufficient to transport them. To this part of his charge, the missionary has to travel over a continued bog of ten miles, called the *Moine*, where *riding* is most difficult, and, without an experienced guide, impracticable.

From the short detail here given, the importance, as well as difficulty of this mission may be estimated, and in no case have FIFTY POUNDS *per annum* of the Society's money

money been better bestowed than in its endowment. The charge is at the same time so very laborious to a conscientious minister, that a man only of a vigorous constitution, and in the prime of life, seems qualified to undertake it;—and such in all respects was the Rev. Mr *John Robertson*, who then filled it; a man, who, by the exertions of a vigorous mind, and by unremitting industry, had acquired both classical learning, and the Gaelic language, after he had attained to manhood.—He was born and bred in a country where no Gaelic is spoken; but having been, in early life, appointed one of the Society's school-masters, in a Highland country, he was led to study that language, and in process of time acquired the utmost readiness and fluency in it.

The Directors think it proper to state here, Mr Robertson's having since that time accepted of a call to be minister of a Chapel of Ease at Rothsay in Bute; the Directors, though they sincerely regretted, could not blame his removing to a far easier, and not less important charge.

Before appointing a successor, the Directors thought it necessary to have a more permanent security for the accommodations required, than the engagement of *Tacks-men*, whose leases they understood were soon to expire. On the first erection of this mission, they could obtain no security from the *Proprietor* of the estate; but as soon as the present LORD REAY, a promising young nobleman, succeeded, his man of business was applied to on the subject, and in course of a correspondence, his Lordship very frankly agreed to continue what was formerly enjoyed, and to furnish whatever more should be found requisite for the comfortable accommodation of the missionary.

The

The Directors nominated, in consequence, to that station, Mr *Neil Macbride*, a licentiate of the presbytery of Edinburgh, who had enjoyed one of the Society's burfaries, and of whose piety and good principles, as well as general acceptableness, they were fully assured.

To return to the Secretary's journey:—Having finished his business in the immediate vicinity of *Eriboll*, having crossed the loch, and taken a view of that part of the parish of *Durness*, which lies towards *Cape Wrath*, he proceeded for *Tongue*. His way led him across the *Moine*, the Bog formerly mentioned, and which was then greatly swelled by long continued rains. Even Major Mackay and Mr Robertson found a guide necessary to direct to a safe course. And although the guide had been born and bred upon the side of it, and kept a quarter of a mile a-head, shaking the ground with his feet, to ascertain where the way was practicable; they found the passage not a little difficult—one of the horses sunk down in the moss, and required the assistance of several men to extricate him.

Having visited the Society's schools, in the parish of *Tongue*, assisted by the worthy Mr Mackenzie, the minister, the Secretary proceeded forwards, through the parish of *Farr*, (a district similar in all respects to Lord Reay's country,) to the parish of *Reay* in Caithness, where at length he had the satisfaction to find himself upon Terra firma;—and where his kind conductor, Major Mackay, took his leave.

Of the country through which the Secretary had just passed, it is to be observed in general, that the arable land consists of patches by the sides of rivers, or arms of the sea, which stretch inland several miles. Some of the farms, particularly in the parish of *Durness*, have a considerable

considerable quantity of arable ground, and, *for this country*, are fertile in no common degree. The sea and the rivers furnish the inhabitants with fish in abundance. In the sands of *Loch-Tongue*, cockles of an extraordinary size are found in the greatest plenty, and constitute no inconsiderable part of the food of the poor; the country, in general, consisting of hill and moor, is favourable for rearing black cattle, of which great numbers are annually sent to the English markets.

To a *stranger*, the aspect of the country must needs appear bleak and dreary, and it is possible, as the Secretary experienced, that his health may suffer from its extreme dampness; the natives, however, neither observe the one, nor are affected by the other. A more active, vigorous, spirited people are no where to be found, nor to strangers more hospitable and obliging. In their general turn of mind they are sober and religious; their manners are orderly and decent; their thirst after knowledge is great; and, ever since the Revolution, their loyalty to the family on the throne, has, even in the worst of times, been unshaken. Among such people, it is not to be doubted that the Society's Teachers are received with avidity and gratitude, and their schools well attended. The Secretary was happy to find the schoolmasters in general, men of respectable talents, and attentive to their duty; nor did he find in any part of the Highlands, young people who discovered a quicker genius for learning.

Understanding that the presbytery of Caithness were assembled at Thurso, the Secretary rode thither, received from his brethren information concerning the Society's schools in their several parishes which he had visited in 1789;—he afterwards went to examine, personally,

ly, those of later erection. Being joined, in these visitations and examinations, by Dr Morison, minister of Cannisbay, who had for some years superintended the Society's schools, both in Caithness and in Orkney, they proceeded to the parish of *Latheron*. In this vast parish, which extends along the sea-coast *twenty-two* miles, besides stretching a great way inland among the hills, the language of the people is entirely *Gaelic*.

The division of language among the different districts of the eastern part of the north of Scotland, is a striking phenomenon, which has never yet been sufficiently accounted for. In *Lord Reay's country*, GAELIC is the only language spoken by the common people.

In *SIX* parishes of the *TEN* which constitute the Presbytery and shire of Caithness, *English* is the general language. In the other *FOUR* *, *Gaelic* is the dialect of the common people; as it is in all the parishes of the counties of *Sutherland* and *Ross*, and also of *Cromarty*, with the exception of three parishes, viz. *Cromarty itself*, *Rosemarkie*, and *Avock*, in which *English* alone is spoken.

Immediately after crossing the Murray Firth, *Gaelic*, excepting in *Fort George* and *Inverness* among strangers and people of better fashion, who speak *English*, the *Gaelic* resumes its influence, and continues along the coast, to *Nairn*, where it ceases. It prevails through the whole of *Invernesshire*, the high districts of that of *Aberdeen* in the line of *Braemar*, and through the Highlands of *Perthshire* to *Dunkeld*, where it gives place to *English* alone and unmixed.

To what cause is this strange intermixture of languages, so radically different, so perfectly foreign to each other

* viz. *Thurso*, (except in the town, where, from the influx of strangers, *English* prevails,) *Reay*, *Halkirk*, and *Latheron*.

other in sound and sense, to be ascribed? The question is of difficult solution; conjecture must supply the place of authentic information, which history does not afford. The subject merits the attention of ANTIQUARIANS, and to them it is left.

Earnest and repeated application having been made to the Society for the erection of a mission in the parish of *Lathberon**, the Directors had agreed to pay the one half of the salary of a missionary there, viz. L. 25.; *Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster* having become bound for the other half, with the usual accommodations. The Directors having reserved to themselves the nomination of the missionary, two candidates were recommended, either of whom would have been acceptable to them: unfortunately however, neither would please the whole people. They were divided into two parties, headed by men of influence in the parish, each keen for its favourite minister, and animosities had proceeded to a great height. The Secretary, having been particularly commissioned to that effect, laboured to put an end to them, and, while he was there, with every prospect of success. Unfortunately, however, after his departure, dissensions again broke out with new violence. And the Directors, in the end, found no other way of making the settlement comfortable, than by setting aside both candidates, though of unexceptionable character, and proposing a third.

Mr *William MacIntosh*, a licentiate of the presbytery of Inverness, and highly recommended by many respectable clergymen of that country, was the person on whom the choice of the Directors fell. Mr MacIntosh

was

* See Account, &c. 1796, p. 37.

was received by the people of the mission with universal satisfaction; was ordained and admitted by the Presbytery of Gaithness to be minister of that mission. He enjoys all the usual accommodations, and is highly respected and useful.

Nothing farther occurs in the report of this tour to claim the attention of the public.

In 1798, the Directors were informed of the death of the Rev. Mr *MacCulloch*, the aged and worthy minister of *Strathfillan*, a chapel of ease for the parishes of Killin and Glenorchy, endowed by the late Lady Glenorchy, and committed to the patronage of the Society*.

The Earl of Breadalbane, the elders of the district, and a very great number of heads of families, having united in a petition, in favour of Mr Hugh MacDougal, a Preacher of the gospel, who had officiated as assistant to Mr MacCulloch, for some time before his death, the Directors appointed him to supply the vacancy, and he was accordingly ordained and admitted into that charge by the presbytery of Dunkeld.

The Society's mission† of New-byth having become vacant last year, by the translation of the Rev. Mr Rainy to the church of Old Meldrum, the Directors nominated to supply that vacancy Mr George Urquhart, a licentiate of the presbytery of Edinburgh, who has received an unanimous call from the people of the district, and was lately admitted, by the presbytery of Turreff to that charge.

The General Meeting having instructed their Committee

* For a fuller account of this mission or chapel, vide "Account of the Funds," &c. published in 1796, p. 36.

† Vide the Account, &c. p. 37.

mittee of Directors, gradually to withdraw the schools on their establishment, from the lower and more improved parts of the Highlands, which had long enjoyed the benefit of them, in order to endow schools, in the most northern and distant parts, to which otherwise their funds cannot extend, and the Directors having received from the Secretary, in consequence of his tour to these parts in 1791, a melancholy representation of the situation of the people of Lewis, with respect to their deficiency in the first principles of literature and religious knowledge, as well as the common arts of civilization,—resolved to bend their endeavours to remedy these defects, by such means as were within their power. A correspondence was instituted with the worthy and liberal Proprietor, (now Lord Seaforth), and his amiable Lady, who, in a special manner, took the means of improving these islanders under her patronage. Parochial schools were erected by the Proprietor, with accommodations and adequate salaries to the schoolmasters, appointed by himself. He also furnished accommodations in a liberal style, to the schoolmasters sent by the Society, to the four parishes into which this extensive and rugged island is divided. Ten schoolmistresses were likewise appointed, for as many different districts of it, at the joint expence of the Proprietor and the Society, with a salary to a person qualified to superintend the whole of these infant seminaries.

Lady Seaforth found, in the obstinacy and folly of the people, many obstacles in bringing to bear her patriotic scheme of diffusing industry among the young females. By dint of patience and perseverance, however, and at no little expence, she has wonderfully succeeded, and besides what is used in the country, many thousand spindles of linen yarn, are annually exported from the island,

spun

spun by females, most of whom, ten years ago, had never so much as seen a spinning-wheel.

The Directors are sorry to say, that the efforts which they have employed, for the promotion of literature and religious knowledge, have been by no means attended with similar success, in that island.

The common people seem to have a rooted aversion to give their children education. They and their fathers having never been taught letters, they cannot conceive of what use they can be to their children :—they think that as literature brings no immediate pecuniary advantage, so it is attended with this very great loss, that it entices their children to leave *them*, and their mean domestic employments at home, and go abroad to push their fortunes in the world. Of consequence, although the Proprietor has established a parochial, and the Society a charity-school, in every parish, (and although in these last the children are not only taught, but furnished with books *gratis*,) yet few children, even of those who live in the immediate vicinity, have attended.

After trying a variety of expedients, in order to remedy this evil, Dr MacLeod, minister of Harris, who, since the year 1791, has superintended the schools of the Society in the Synod of Glenelg, has devised a plan, in concert with Lord Seaforth, which promises to prove effectual.

It shall be stated in his own words, in his report of a tour which he made through the island of Lewis in the month of September last. After having stated the erection and liberal endowment of parochial schools, and the excellent accommodations furnished to those of the Society, by the noble Proprietor ; the Doctor adds.

“ The advantages of all these beneficent institutions,
“ are

'are obvious to almost every person of common under-
 'standing. They only, whose minds are darkened by
 'ignorance and prejudice, can be insensible of them.
 'Yet such is the barbarity of the unhappy people of this
 'country, among whom they are established, and such
 'their savage habits, that their progress hitherto has been
 'cruelly retarded. Talk to any of them of the advanta-
 'ges of knowledge, you may as well describe colours to
 'one born blind. In vain do you point out to them ex-
 'amples so near at hand, and so well known as in the
 'town of Stornoway, (the only town in the island,) of
 'persons who have risen, in consequence of education,
 'from a state of ignorance, poverty and servitude, to
 'knowledge, opulence and independence, you only rivet
 'the father's prejudices the more strongly, and give a fresh
 'alarm to his fears, lest by sending his son to school, he
 'be for ever deprived of his assistance in his menial la-
 'bours. The prospect of advantage from school appears
 'to him, at best, distant and uncertain. The service of
 'his child, as soon as he can herd a cow, or handle a
 'spade, he considers as a present good, and looks no far-
 'ther into consequences.

" Except in the town of Stornoway, where a more
 'enlightened spirit prevails, the rude inhabitants of this
 'country have, in general, these unfortunate prepossession-
 'sions deeply rooted in their minds, are callous to the
 'remonstrances of their worthy pastors, and uniformly
 'averse to literary schools. It was the authoritative in-
 'fluence of Lord Seaforth alone, which brought the num-
 'ber of scholars now reported to be attending the school
 'at Ness, (one of the Society's), and in the present state
 'of this country, the continuance of that authority, till a
 'more liberal spirit shall obtain, will be true benevo-
 'lence.

" It

“ It is evident that some degree of compulsion, tempered with lenity and prudence, is necessary to oblige these poor ignorant creatures to do what so obviously tends to the benefit of their own families, as well as to the general civilization of the country.

“ In the vicinity of the school of *Berneray*, which the Society, after the schoolmaster had been for twenty-seven months without a single scholar, had, on that account, found themselves obliged to suppress, there are no fewer than *seventy-five* boys, and *fifty-four* girls, most of whom might attend during the greatest part of the year, but who, from the malignant cause now assigned, are doomed to all the horrors of ignorance and wretchedness.

“ Mr Chapman, (Lord Seaforth's factor, armed with authority for that purpose), after many efforts by mild persuasion had proved ineffectual, in just indignation, gave out in public orders, that unless the schools shall be immediately filled with scholars, he will point out to Lord Seaforth the most refractory among the tenants, to be warned out of their possessions before Whitfunday next. And strong as this measure may appear to men in the civilized parts of the kingdom, it is the only expedient in this part of the country that is likely to produce the intended effect *. If it shall succeed, as I hope

it

* In the year 1791, the Secretary of the Society, in course of his tour, was told by a gentleman of fortune and high respectability, in the west coast of Ross-shire *, that about thirty years before that time, when he and the other trustees of the late Lord Seaforth, then a minor, were obliged to issue an order to the people of Lewis, to plant potatoes in quantities

* Mr Mackenzie of Applecross.

‘ it will, a large supply of books should be sent from the
 ‘ Society to Stornoway, addressed to the Moderator of the
 ‘ presbytery of Lewis, who will see them properly distributed.’”

This melancholy picture of the ignorance of the inhabitants of Lewis, is drawn, not by a stranger, cursorily passing through the country, but by a Clergyman of well known talents and respectability, Minister of the next adjacent parish, whom frequent intercourse with the people of Lewis has furnished with the best opportunities of knowing their opinions and habits.

Such as the inhabitants of Lewis are represented to be at this day, such were those of by far the greater part of the Highlands and islands of Scotland at the time of the institution of the Society for propagating Christian knowledge, and for many years afterwards :—and to the unremitting efforts of that Society, in establishing schools, distributing books, and introducing the arts of industry,

quantities, proportioned to the extent of their holdings, and *that* under the penalty of being turned out of their farms,—a violent outcry was raised against the mandate, as tyrannical in the extreme.—For many years past, potatoes have been so much an article of their food, that one cannot well conceive how they could subsist without them.—So necessary and wholesome often, is the exercise of somewhat of an arbitrary power, to compel ignorant men to adopt measures obviously for their own good.

The gentleman added, that at the same period, the trustees of Lord Seaforth ordered the tenants in Lewis to enclose a bit of ground for a garden, and to plant vegetables, particularly kail, (cole-wort). “ They said they would do so, but thanked God, *that even Lord Seaforth could not make them eat them.*”

industry, the happy change which has since taken place, is (in the judgment of those who are best acquainted with the state of the country,) in great measure to be ascribed.

The Directors indulge the hope, that, through the efforts of the benevolent Proprietor, and of the Society united, the habits and manners of the people of Lewis shall, ere many years elapse, correspond to those of the far greater part of the Highlands, where education is held in general estimation, and where the cry of the inhabitants for more schools than it is possible for the Society, on their present funds to grant to them, is loud and urgent.

Some gentlemen of Scotland are to be found even in the present times, whose minds are so singularly constituted, as not only to deny the usefulness of giving education in the first principles of literature to the common people, but to ascribe to it effects pernicious to them and the country: "it elevates their minds above the sphere 'to which Providence has doomed them—makes them 'discontented with their condition and mean employ- 'ments—and inspires them with a restless desire to leave 'the plough, and the spade, to push their fortunes abroad." Perhaps, upon a narrow investigation into the true cause of this outcry against schools for the vulgar, it will be found to consist, with not a few at least, in a desire to keep their people *at home, in ignorance and sub- jection.*

If gentlemen, however, are not to be convinced by arguments addressed to their understanding and feelings, as men and as Christians, they may perhaps be affected, in some measure, by attending to well known facts.

The gross ignorance of the common people of France is known to all who are acquainted with that country.

Had

Had they, in place of having their attention chiefly directed to the external and frivolous ceremonies of religion, been instructed in the genuine principles of Christianity, is it to be believed, that they would have become instruments, in the hands of pretended patriots, and atheistical philosophers, of committing the horrid excesses, which, within these few years, have disgraced that unhappy country?

Let those who are adverse to the instruction of the common people, look to the state of a country with which we are more nearly concerned;—let them peruse the accounts of the late rebellion in Ireland, scarcely as yet appeased, and in them they will perceive, written in characters of blood, the deplorable effects of the ignorance of the people.

In the last session of the Irish Parliament, a member of the house of Commons, and chairman of a committee appointed to enquire into the state of education in that kingdom, introduced the report of the committee with a remarkable speech, in which he contrasted the peasantry of Scotland with those of Ireland. “Converse,” said he, ‘with any man from among the lowest of the people in Scotland, and you will find him intelligent, and well informed upon all subjects of ordinary occurrence; talk to an Irishman of the same order, and you will discover that he has few more ideas than a brute. To what is this difference between men of the same condition to be ascribed? Not to any natural defect of talents or genius; for in this respect the commons of Ireland are as liberally endued as any in the world; it is education alone which constitutes the difference. In Scotland, by means of parochial and other schools, the peasants in early life are taught to read, to think, and to know the principles of religion and sound morals. In Ireland they are
‘utterly

‘utterly neglected, and of consequence are perpetual dupes
 ‘to artful designing villains, who take advantage of their
 ‘ignorance and superstition, to lead them into excesses
 ‘disgraceful to humanity *’.

In

* An anecdote, for which the writer of this note pledges his veracity, having had it from the gentleman himself who was the sufferer, will serve as an illustration of the above statement.

Mr B——, a gentleman of a noble family in Ireland, who had been for four successive Parliaments, and who was then representative of the county in which he resided, who lived in a splendid and hospitable style, and whose house was open, particularly to clergymen of the country, without distinction of Popish or Protestant, put himself at the head of a body of gentlemen-yeomanry, who had united for the defence of their King and country, at the time of the threatened French invasion of Ireland. He incurred, of consequence, the resentment of the rebels, who vowed vengeance. They determined to destroy his house:—the gentleman himself was absent:—notice, however, was sent by a friend of the family to his lady, an amiable accomplished woman, only two hours before the approach of the rebels. She immediately fled, with her six children, and betook herself for shelter to a small vessel, riding at anchor on the neighbouring shore. The seamen on board, infected by the contagion of the country, immediately, in spite of all her entreaties to carry her and her children to any place of safety in the neighbourhood, deserted the ship. She was obliged to return on shore, and take refuge in a small cottage, inhabited by an old woman, a dependant on the family, who, for the space of eight days, went abroad in the night time, to procure mere necessities to support the lives of her illustrious guests.

Meantime the rabble, headed by a rascally friar, came to

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In July 1798, the Society were informed of the death of the Rev. *Dr Morison*, minister of Canisbay, in Caithness, who, from the year 1790, (the date of the Secretary's

the gentleman's house, with which he was well acquainted, having often, along with his brethren, shared in its hospitality, and going up to the library, and rummaging about, he found a book printed in the old Saxon character, together with a piece of Port-Fire. These he carried down to the mob, and holding up the book, exclaimed, "This is the book of magic with which Mr B—— performs his incantations for the destruction of the true Catholics." Then kindling the match, and dipping it in a pail of water which he had provided for the purpose, and bringing it out still burning, he appealed to them whether this was not decisive evidence of what Mr B—— could do by magic to accomplish their ruin. Then leading the mob to a rivulet in the neighbourhood, after many prayers and exorcisms, he plunged the book and the Port-Fire into the water, laid stones upon them, and exhorted the people, every one, to bring a stone to bury them under such a heap that they could never rise again to do mischief. All this mummery was but a prelude to what followed. By these tricks the people being inflamed into madness,—he led them back to the mansion house, where they fell to work, and first tore to pieces the library, (a noble one, which had cost above L. 2000), then plundered or demolished the furniture, and every thing they could lay their hands upon, and in the space of two or three hours did damage to the amount of several thousand pounds.

This is one instance of many, which occurred amidst the horrid scenes of the late rebellion in Ireland, but it sufficiently marks the deplorable effects of ignorance in the body of the people at large.

It may be asked, with confidence, whether any art or power

Secretary's first tour into that country), to that period, had acted as superintendant of their schools in Caithness and the Orkney islands. From his zealous attachment
to

power of persuasion upon the part of the most popular demagogue who ever gained their favour, could produce such effects upon even a mob of Scotch peasantry? Their enlightened minds would, at once, have detected, and treated with contempt and indignation, such infamous artifices to mislead them. Let the following well known fact serve as a proof.

In the year 1797, an act passed in the British Parliament, for calling out a certain number of young men from each parish, to constitute a militia for the internal defence of the country. A popular clamour was raised against the measure in every part of Scotland, the most abominable falsehoods were devised and propagated to inflame the minds of the people; they were made to believe that this was a plot of the King's ministers, (who had not money for enlisting of soldiers in the usual way) to force young men into the service, in order to send them abroad to *the East Indies*, as was sometimes said, and to *Hanover* at others, to defend his Majesty's electoral dominions.

Absurd as these representations of this truly constitutional measure were, they for a time obtained credit with the populace, and the consequences are well known. In many parts of Scotland, in the Highlands particularly, the people rose in a tumultuous manner; but what was the mischief they did? They insisted with, and threatened into a compliance, some gentlemen, that they should not give their assistance to put the obnoxious act in execution. Having in most cases obtained a promise to this effect, they quietly dispersed, and public tranquillity was immediately restored. Amidst all the tumults on this occasion, no life was lost, no blood was shed,
no

to the objects of their Institution, and frequent visitations of their schools, the Directors derived much important benefit ; errors were corrected, accommodations were

no house was burnt, no man's property was destroyed. The whole mischief originated from want of attention (as no evil was apprehended) to explain to the people the nature and true design of the measure before the time of its execution arrived, and this gave encouragement and opportunity to ill-designing factious men to propagate those malicious representations of it which have been mentioned. Had the people been duly apprized of its true nature and tendency, all their arts would have proved vain.

These well known facts serve to place the character and genius of the commons of the two countries in their true light. In the one, gross ignorance of the very first principles of religion and morals, prepares them for every scene of outrage and of blood, into which factious leaders may choose to lead them ; in the other, the minds of the people, enlightened by an early education, are prepared to resist every solicitation to outrage, and to prefer counsels which lead to moderation, peace and loyalty.

It is asked therefore, with some degree of confidence, whether, even in a political view, they who, by unwearied pains and exertion, without any prospect of personal advantage, have been instrumental in spreading light, and knowledge, and religion, over the dark, and, but for them, neglected corners of their country, have not obtained a title to the gratitude of their fellow citizens ?

Much it is to be wished that a society were formed in Ireland similar to that which has so long subsisted in Scotland, under the name of "*The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge.*"

It is true that a Society "for erecting and promoting
English

were better furnished to the schoolmasters, and their diligence was stimulated and encouraged. The Directors mourned over the loss of so faithful a fellow-labourer, and willingly give this tribute of grateful acknowledgment to his memory.

The

English Protestant Schools in Ireland," was incorporated by Royal Charter, in 1733; the original members of which were the Lord Lieutenant for the time, the Primate, the Archbishops, the Bishops, with the principal nobility, clergy and gentry of the kingdom. It is also true, that at the outset, and for some time after the commencement of the plan, much zeal was displayed in carrying it on, and that most liberal encouragement has all along been given by Parliament for its support;—yet it is a melancholy truth, well known to all who are acquainted with the state of things in that country, that these schools have, considering the expence of their endowment, been attended with little comparative advantage, particularly in the southern parts of the island, where Popery is the religion of the great body of the people. In some of these parts, if common report may be credited, the salaries of many of the teachers, have degenerated into little else than sinecure pensions, and not a few of the pretended schoolmasters live at the distance of many miles from the place where they ought to be employed in teaching.

In one important respect, indeed, the situation of Ireland, is widely different from that of Scotland. The great body of the common people of Ireland are bigotted Roman Catholics. In such a country, to erect, and procure attendance upon Protestant schools, and to render them extensively useful, is undoubtedly a matter of difficult accomplishment, requiring no ordinary share, both of delicacy and prudence. To attempt this, merely by government appointments,

The Secretary, who, for many years previous to his election into that office *, had been one of the Directors of the Society, and who well knew from experience

* In 1789.

pointments, and parliamentary aids, there is much reason to fear will never succeed. The experiment has already been tried, and has failed: it can scarcely be again attempted under more favourable circumstances.

But were private individuals, of real piety, patriotism, prudence and zeal, to unite together for this important purpose; were they to begin their labours upon a small scale,—to beware of giving offence, or exciting an alarm among the bigotted vulgar, and those by whom they are led; were the happy effects of their first institutions to become evident to the people themselves, ignorant and superstitious as they are, it is not improbable that the influence of their labours might silently and quietly, without noise or observation, spread through the country, and that the most extensive good consequences would, in process of time, ensue.

A pamphlet, published in Dublin last year, written with ability, and which excited much attention in Ireland *, contains the following passages, that serve to confirm these sentiments: “Parliament has cast off another prejudice—that education may be dangerous in the present temper and circumstances of mankind; an idea once very prevalent, though now, I believe, generally disclaimed. Strange! that so absurd a position should ever have been received, especially in this nation. What! are the people of Ireland too much enlightened? Have all the horrors and crimes we have witnessed proceeded from their learning? No; this can never be asserted: every one admits that we are

* Entitled, “Essay on the Present State of Manners and Education among the Lower Classes of the People of Ireland, Dublin 1799.”

perience the necessity of the measure; had, in concert with the Directors, formed a plan of visiting, personally, all the schools upon the establishment of the

are now ignorant. Do we not also appear the most disturbed and unhappy among the nations? If, then, our monstrous vices have kept pace with our brutal ignorance, is it not a strong presumption, is it not a moral demonstration, that they are connected? This connection has indeed of late been clearly laid open; it is almost become a truism, and is lamentably illustrated by the history of our disasters; we learn it from the boastings of our enemies, and the confessions of our traitors. In the developement of their plots, it appears that they grounded their hopes of success on the general ignorance, on the semi-barbarous state of the people, which, as they add, is, of all others, the best adapted for making war."

Afterwards, p. 8. the author proceeds, "I cannot perceive, in the systems at present proposed, any fundamental difference, any more efficacious and vigorous principle, than supported those which had already been proved altogether insufficient. The plans indeed, appear admirable, but the mainspring is wanting, whereby the whole machinery is to be set in motion, or at least whereby its operation could be long continued. To instance, in the last plan proposed to the House of Commons, by the Chairman of the Committee, he requires that schoolmasters be appointed in each parish, with competent salaries; that they shall be appointed by the clergyman and magistrate, and remain subject to their visitation and controul. But does not the great difficulty yet remain; how are you to rouse and encourage the magistrate and clergyman to such active and impartial enquiry into the character of the master, and still more to such anxious inspection of his conduct, such laborious

the Society. His constituents, at large, gave him their warmest encouragement to begin and persevere in the accomplishment of the plan. In course of a variety of long journeys, of which some account has been laid before the Public, he had accomplished the whole of it, and visited all the parts of the Highlands and islands where Society schools have been erected, the islands of Orkney and Shetland alone excepted. To these he resolved last summer, circumstances not having permitted it sooner, to direct his course. The Directors, and the general meeting, who

laborious and constant attendance upon the school, as would promise greater fruits than have hitherto been produced, by the many abused or decayed institutions which already exist throughout this kingdom? Mr Edgworth (Chairman of the Committee) felt no doubt the necessity of this superintendence; he must know, indeed, that without it all public institutions become nugatory or dangerous: but what expedient has he devised for enforcing it? His Act of Parliament does no more than acquaint the magistrate what is his duty. Is that sufficient to make him practise it? No. Statutes cannot inspire zeal, patriotism, and religion. Like the tortoise which was to support the elephant, which was to support the world, unfortunately they want support themselves."

Does not this reasoning point out the necessity of such an institution in Ireland, as the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge? Let real patriots, and the true friends of religion in that country, form an association for like purposes. Their subsidiary aids to whatever plans may be adopted by Parliament, would, if conducted with prudence and zeal, have a happy and powerful influence in diffusing a congenial spirit, and prompting to emulation.

who wished much for particular information concerning these remote islands, and the schools of the Society in them, encouraged the design. An application to the Board of Customs, through the channel of one of the Commissioners, who is at the same time a Director of the Society, obtained for the Secretary the same favour which had been granted to him in 1791, on his tour to the Western Highlands and Islands; viz. one of their revenue-cutters to attend him.

He set out from Edinburgh early in June, and having travelled by land to Fort George, the cutter received him there, and in two days he arrived at Lerwick, the only *Town* in the Shetland islands. Having met with Mr Menzies, the respectable minister of that place, he was kind enough to accompany him on an extensive tour through the main-land, and several of the islands of Shetland; he was prevented from visiting them all, by information that the Presbytery of Shetland, consisting of twelve ministers, was to meet at Lerwick the week after he arrived in the country. He thought it of consequence to the objects of his mission, to wait upon them when met together. He therefore shortened his tour through the country, returned to Lerwick, met with the Presbytery, and gave in to them a written representation, setting forth "the well known law of Scotland, with respect to 'the erection of parochial schools in every parish within 'the realm; the many acts of Assembly enjoining presbyteries to use diligence, in order to obtain the execution 'of that law in the various parishes within their bounds, 'and the resolution which the Society, long ago formed, 'of erecting no school, in any parish, in which there is 'not an established parochial school; that, notwithstanding, from ignorance of circumstances, the Society had, 'at different periods, been induced to erect schools in
e Shetland,

‘ Shetland, amounting now in whole to no fewer than *nine*;
 ‘ while, so far as he had been informed, in all its twelve
 ‘ parishes, only two parochial schools have been establish-
 ‘ ed; that the Society having taken this matter into se-
 ‘ rious consideration, had come to an unanimous resolu-
 ‘ tion, of acting upon the same principle with respect to
 ‘ Shetland, as to other parts of Scotland. He requested,
 ‘ therefore, that the Presbytery would immediately take
 ‘ the necessary steps, in order to prevent the suppression
 ‘ of the Society’s schools within their bounds; a measure
 ‘ which would be no less unpleasant to the Society than
 ‘ to the Presbytery.”

The members present, (all of whom behaved with the greatest personal attention to the Secretary), took his representation in good part; entered seriously into the consideration of the subject of it, and at length came to the unanimous resolution of adopting immediate and decisive measures for having parochial schools erected in all their parishes in which they are wanting. They appointed an intimation to this effect, to be published from their respective pulpits next Lord’s day. The Secretary found good reason, both from the zeal for the measure, expressed by some of the leading members of the Presbytery, and from the assurances given him by some of the principal landholders, of their consent to the plan, that it will be carried into effect; though not perhaps in all the parishes so soon as could be wished.

When the Secretary found, that in consequence of his attendance upon the Presbytery, he could not visit all the schoolmasters of the Society, in that country, at their proper stations, he sent expresses for them to come to him at Lerwick. They accordingly came and conversed with him there; reported to him the state of their schools, in respect of numbers attending at the different
 seasons

seasons of the year; the school-fees paid them, (generally next to nothing); their accommodations, as to dwelling-houses, school-rooms, &c.; and having also made particular enquiry, at the several ministers, concerning each of them, he found reason to report to his constituents, that they are, without exception, a worthy, useful, and respectable set of men,—whose livings are very far from being adequate to their desert.

They are useful, not merely as teachers of the young, but as catechists and readers among the old. For as almost all the parishes in Shetland have two at least, and sometimes more churches, the Society's schoolmasters, in some measure, supply to the people the want of the ministers, on the Lord's days when they are obliged in duty to be absent. They preside among them in religious exercises, and in reading to them the Scriptures, and pious books. The Secretary, as authorised by his constituents, gave to each of the schoolmasters a present in money, according to what their circumstances seemed to require; and to all, a liberal supply of books, from the large stock which he had brought with him for that purpose, from the Society's library.

Having finished all the business which he found it possible for him to do in Shetland, and taken down, in his Journal, all the information concerning that country, which he had collected, and judged necessary to be stated to his constituents, he took leave of it on the 28th of June, and next day arrived at *Fair Isle*, a small island, situated about mid-way between Shetland and Orkney; the property of Mr Stewart of Burgh, a gentleman of considerable fortune in Orkney, who happened to be in the island at that time collecting his rents; and from whom the Secretary, and those who were with him, received the kindest attention, which his situation *there* permitted,

mitted, as well as a promise to improve the situation of the schoolmaster, in respect of accommodations. The island contains two hundred and forty souls. The men are all fishers; and under Mr Stewart's management, since he became their landlord, a few years ago, have got into easy circumstances, as the Secretary was informed; and their appearance in church vindicated the truth of the information.

On his arrival in the island, the elders came soliciting him to baptize a number of children, some of whom were considerably advanced in age; no minister having been there for several years before. This office, Mr Mill, the aged and worthy minister of Dunrossness, to which parish the island belongs, had, before parting with him at Lerwick, requested him to perform; being himself unable to travel eight leagues by sea in an open boat, the only way by which he has it in his power to be conveyed to this part of his charge. The Secretary desired the elders to collect the parents and children, with as many of the people as could come. By the time that he had visited the school, which the Society have for many years maintained in the island, almost the whole inhabitants assembled, and the Secretary took that opportunity of preaching to them at great length: he was listened to with the most profound attention; and not without strong signs of tenderness and sensibility. The people were all most becomingly dressed, and sung church music delightfully. Eleven children were baptized.

The inhabitants of Fair Isle seem to possess the same character, and to live entirely in the same manner, as the inhabitants of the other Shetland islands; who are, in general, a sober-minded, quiet, and ingenuous people, —subjected to many hardships, and to extreme poverty,
yet

yet bearing them with patience and meekness;—eagerly desirous of information and knowledge, yet, from the vast extent, and disjointed nature of many of the parishes, as well as from the want of schools, hitherto but ill provided in the means of instruction. From the measures now taking, a remedy, it is to be hoped, will, in some degree, be found for this last evil.

From Fair Isle, the Secretary proceeded to Kirkwall, the capital of the Orkney islands, and in the hospitable house of Mr Riddoch, Collector of the Customs there, found a most polite and kind reception.

In an ecclesiastical view, the Orkney islands compose a *Synod*, consisting of three Presbyteries, viz. *Kirkwall*, *Cairnlon*, and *the North Isles*; each of these having six parishes within its jurisdiction.

The Secretary visited all the schools of the Society in Orkney, *eleven* in number; examined them, and took down, in writing, for the use of his constituents, a Report, of the situation and accommodations of each; of the character and conduct of its schoolmaster, the number and progress of his scholars, with every other circumstance worthy of attention. Upon the whole, he found reason to report, concerning the Society's teachers in that country, that they are a most useful body of men; and that of this, the clergy, and the inhabitants at large, are fully sensible, and gratefully acknowledge it. To the far greater number of them he gave (because he found they stood in need of it,) a present in money, and to all of them a supply of books. From the clergy, (and he saw all of them who were then in the country), he received the kindest attention, both when he met with them separately, and when many of them assembled collectively at Kirkwall, on purpose to converse with him upon a subject, which had engaged much of the concern

cern of his constituents, and was particularly recommended to his attention, viz. the establishment of parochial schools in Orkney; in respect of which, that country, as well as Shetland, has hitherto been miserably deficient.

With the approbation and concurrence of the ministers who met with him, he wrote letters to the several Presbyteries, in a strain similar to that of the representation which he had given in to the Presbytery of Shetland. He also applied for their concurrence to such of the gentlemen-landholders of the country, as he had access to meet with, and received a most favourable answer *. After having completed, as far as they could be attained, the several objects of his mission to Orkney, the Secretary took leave of that country, with a very grateful sense of the kindness he had experienced from all classes of the inhabitants with whom he had intercourse; and after a pleasant and quick passage, landed at Cromarty.

Travelling round the coast, he visited a variety of schools which had been erected since his last tour in that country, and transacted other business of the Society, of considerable consequence, which had been given him in charge; a particular detail of which, and of his journeys and proceedings in all the islands which he visited, was on his return given in to the Directors; but being by far too long

* Mr Stewart of Burgh, Mr Laing of Strynie, Mr Riddoch of Cairnston, and Captain Traill of Woodwick, were among the number.

He was assured by those who knew him well, (though unfortunately the Secretary had not the happiness to meet with him), that the consent of Mr Baikie of Tankerness would not be wanting.

long to be read to them when assembled, was handed about among them individually. Of that detail the preceding short abstract is given; being all that could be admitted into an Appendix, without swelling it beyond all reasonable bounds.

Thus has he finished the whole of that extensive plan which had been devised, when he accepted of the laborious, though gratuitous office of Secretary to the Society. In the course of his long-continued, and very various travels, both by sea and land, he has experienced, no doubt, considerable fatigue, and sometimes hardship: but he has had the happiness to enjoy the unqualified approbation, and continuing confidence of the Society; he has conveyed to them a body of information, concerning characters, facts and circumstances, of importance for them to know, but which they could not have obtained by any other means than such a visitation; and he has the satisfaction to think, that he has thus contributed to promote the best interests of religion among a very great number of his countrymen, in these remote, and too long neglected corners.

Since the Secretary's return to Edinburgh, the Directors have had the satisfaction to learn, that the subject of parochial schools was taken into serious consideration, by the Synod of Orkney, at their meeting in August following, when they enjoined each of the presbyteries, to take care that the several ministers within their bounds, in whose parishes parochial schools are wanting, should, without delay, employ the most prudent and effectual means for having that defect speedily supplied.

At the same time they think it necessary to state the measures which have since been adopted by them, and the General Meeting of the Society, with respect to the
erection

erection of parochial schools, both in Orkney and Shetland.

They first entered into an unanimous resolution; which they ordered to be immediately conveyed to the ministers in both countries, that in all the parishes in Shetland, which should not be provided with a parochial school *within a year and a half* from and after the first of November then current, and in Orkney *within a year* from the same period, the Society's schools should be suppressed.

They next resolved to address the principal landholders on the subject; well knowing, that without their countenance and approbation, the object proposed, if not impracticable, would, at least, be of most tedious and difficult attainment. With this view, a deputation of their number was appointed, to wait, in the first place, upon Lord Dundas, the superior, as well as principal heritor, both of Shetland and Orkney; and then upon Lord Armadale, the next heritor in respect of rank, as well as of extent of property, in Orkney. The Earl of Kinnoull, the worthy President of the Board of Directors, who happened to be in the chair, was kind enough to take upon himself the office of conversing with Lord Dundas on the subject, and after a most polite reception, obtained his Lordship's hearty approbation to the measure proposed. Nor was this all,—the Secretary being desired to give in to Lord Dundas, in writing, a representation upon the subject, his consent was annexed in the most unequivocal terms.

The following is a copy of that paper, and of Lord Dundas's answer.

“ The

" The islands of Shetland are divided into twelve parishes, those of Orkney into eighteen. In the twelve parishes of Shetland there are established only *two* parochial schools. In the eighteen of Orkney only *three*.

" The law of Scotland requires, that in every parish there shall be erected a parochial school, the salary of the schoolmaster to be appointed by the commissioners of supply for the county; the minimum to be 100 merks Scots, (L. 5 : 11 : 1 $\frac{1}{2}$), and the maximum 200 merks.

" The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, laid it down as a fundamental rule of their Institution, that they would grant no schoolmaster's salary, from their funds, to any parish in which a parochial one is not established. In Shetland and Orkney this rule has, for some time past, owing partly to ignorance of facts, and partly to urgent solicitation in favour of particular places, been departed from; and accordingly *nine* of their schools have been erected in Shetland, and *eleven* in Orkney.

" The Society, however, have now come to a resolution, and ordered it to be intimated to the clergy both of Shetland and Orkney, that they will suppress the schools on their establishment, in every parish in Shetland, in which a parochial one shall not be erected within *a year and a half* from the first of November last, and in Orkney, within *a year* of the same period. The Society, at the same time, have no wish to withdraw any part of their funds, already bestowed on these islands; they are conscious that many more schools would still be necessary, even though parochial schools were added to theirs, in these remote parts, so little favoured with the means of education. It is with a view to increase,

‘ not to diminish them, that they have now resolved to
 ‘ adhere strictly to their fundamental rule, above laid
 ‘ down, trusting that the liberal-minded, among the
 ‘ Proprietors of these islands, will give their consent to
 ‘ the establishment of schools upon the usual funds, and
 ‘ agreeable to the well-known laws respecting that mat-
 ‘ ter, in all these parishes where their interest lies.

“ To Lord Dundas, the superior and principal Pro-
 ‘ prietor in both countries, the Society naturally turn
 ‘ their views for a pattern and example to the rest of the
 ‘ heritors, and earnestly request of his Lordship, that he
 ‘ may be pleased to give instructions to his men of bu-
 ‘ siness, agents in town, and factors in the country in
 ‘ general, signifying his consent to the measure propo-
 ‘ sed, and also his willingness to pay his proportion of
 ‘ the salary which may be thought necessary and proper
 ‘ for the schoolmaster of each particular parish, where
 ‘ his Lordship’s property lies, as also for a school and
 ‘ dwelling-house for the schoolmaster, with a kail-yard,
 ‘ and whatever other accommodation may appear essen-
 ‘ tially requisite to his comfortable subsistence.

“ These facts, and this request, are, in name of the
 ‘ above designed Society, respectfully intimated to Lord
 ‘ Dundas, by his Lordship’s most obedient servant,

‘ JOHN KEMP, Sec.

‘ *Edinburgh, January 15. 1800.*”

“ I hereby intimate my entire consent to the measure
 ‘ proposed, viz. the erection of parochial schools in all
 ‘ the parishes of Shetland and Orkney in which my pro-
 ‘ perty

‘ perty lies, and hereby direct my factors, in all meet-
 ‘ ings of heritors or of commissioners of supply, before
 ‘ whom this business may come, to agree in my name,
 ‘ to grant such salaries, and such accommodations, to
 ‘ the several schoolmasters, as the particular circum-
 ‘ stances of the case may render necessary and proper.

‘ DUNDAS.

‘ *Edinburgh, January 18. 1800.*”

Lord Armadale, in terms no less obliging, has intimated his consent to the measure.

The Secretary having sent to him a copy of the above representation to Lord Dundas, and of his answer, and intimated the intention of a deputation from the Directors of the Society, to wait upon him, his Lordship, instead of staying for that formality, kindly prevented them by the following card.

“ Lord Armadale presents his compliments to Dr
 ‘ Kemp, and the other members of the Committee of
 ‘ the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge.
 ‘ He has received their account of the funds, together
 ‘ with a copy of the representation to Lord Dundas.
 ‘ Lord Armadale begs leave to assure them, that he not
 ‘ only approves of the measure proposed, of erecting
 ‘ parochial schools in all the parishes of Orkney in which
 ‘ his property lies, but also hereby directs and authori-
 ‘ ses his factor, Mr John Rae, in Orkney, to attend all
 ‘ meetings of heritors, before whom this business may
 ‘ come, to concur in granting such salaries, and such ac-
 ‘ commodations, to the several schoolmasters, as the par-
 ‘ ticular

‘ ticular circumstances of each case may render necessary
 ‘ and proper, and consistent with the laudable views of
 ‘ the Society. Lord Armadale has taken the liberty of
 ‘ transmitting to his factor, Mr Rae, the copy of the
 ‘ representation to Lord Dundas, for his government.

‘ *Park-Place, February 11. 1800.*”

Admiral Græme of Holm, who was written to on the subject, has also agreed, and given orders to his factor accordingly. Nor have the Directors a doubt of the concurrence of Mr Traill, sheriff of Caithness, and proprietor of a considerable part of the valuable island of Sanday, in Orkney. Mr David Balfour, clerk to the signet, agent for different landholders in that country, and Malcom Laing, Esq. Advocate, have also mentioned their concurrence in the plan.

On the whole, the Directors have good reason to hope, that the erection of parochial schools in Shetland and Orkney, a measure long wished for, and evidently of high importance, will, ere long, be carried into full effect.

There is one other object to which the Directors take the liberty to solicit the attention of the Public, viz. the disproportion which there is between the provision made for the Teachers in their service, and the necessary expence of maintaining their families. The failure of the crops, in consequence of the late unfavourable season, has raised the price of provisions beyond what was ever known by the generation now alive, or their fathers. At this present time, the average price of oat-meal,

meal, throughout Scotland, is not less than 40s. *per* boll, of eight stones weight. The medium of salaries which the Society pay to 228 Schoolmasters,—the number on their establishment, for the year ending 1st May next, is L. 12;—the medium of salaries which they pay to 102 female Teachers, the number maintained by them for the same period, is only L. 5. With incomes so inadequate to the present times, it is no wonder that many of both descriptions have been reduced to such straits, that the Directors have found it necessary to allot a considerable sum for a temporary supply to the most necessitous of them.

The present price of provisions will, there is reason to hope, be soon reduced to a more moderate standard; but there is little ground to expect that it will ever return to its former level. While trade and manufactures continue to flourish, the consumption and price of provisions must necessarily be great; and the expence of living, to all ranks, will correspond. Hence, to preserve to the Teachers employed by them, some degree of comfort and of respectability, the Society will be under the necessity of making a general augmentation of their salaries. To this, however, their funds are, on the present plan, entirely inadequate. Having already stretched their income to its utmost extent, in erecting schools and missions, furnishing books, translating and printing, &c. they found the late temporary supply, which it was necessary to allow to the Teachers employed by them, encroach so much upon their funds, that they have been obliged, not only to refuse many applications for new schools to districts where they are greatly wanted, but also to reduce the number upon their establishment. In such circumstances, the only way in which the Society have it in their power to give the
much-

much-needed increase of salary to the Teachers, is by diminishing still farther their number. This is a measure which the Society will feel great reluctance in being compelled to take ; but they have no alternative, unless a generous Public, satisfied that their funds are faithfully managed, shall be pleased by new benefactions to increase them.

To this part of the subject they beg leave to solicit attention from their munificent Benefactors, of England in general, of London in particular,—to whom they have been so often, and so greatly obliged. It is by the liberal exertions of the friends of religion, in England, that the Society have been enabled to carry their scheme to its present height : And it is to the generous continuance of the same exertions, that they principally look for the necessary means of at least maintaining, if not enlarging its extensive usefulness.

An increase of the Funds of the Society, and a consequent enlargement of their Establishment, will bring, no doubt, an accession of labour to the Directors ; but to this they will cheerfully submit, conscious that, by their gratuitous efforts, they are promoting the most valuable and important interests of a multitude of their fellow-citizens.



So-

SOCIETY-HALL, MARCH 1800.

THE Reverend Author of the preceding excellent Sermon, having been prevented, by numerous and important engagements, from giving in his manuscript for the press, till a much later period than usual, the Directors are enabled to state the number of their Schools, fixed by the scheme for the year, from the 1st of May next, and the amount of the sum allowed for salaries, in the following

A B S T R A C T

Of the Scheme of the Society's Establishments for the year, from 1st May 1800, to 1st May 1801.

	<i>Salaries.</i>
200 schools on the first patent,	L. 2459 0 0
19 superannuated teachers on Ditto,	147 0 0
13 missionaries and catechists,	336 0 0
6 Gaelic bursaries,	90 0 0
94 schools on the second patent,	459 0 0
1 superannuated teacher on Ditto,	5 0 0
333	L. 3,496 0 0

The number of scholars usually taught at the above schools, at an average, on the first patent, viz. for the purposes of religion, and the first principles of literature, is computed to be

At the schools for industry, on the second patent,

	10,000
	1,880
In all,	11,880

The

*The PRESIDENT, DIRECTORS, and OFFICERS of the
SOCIETY, for the year 1800.*

DAVID, EARL OF LEVEN AND MELVILL,
President of the Society.

COMMITTEE OF DIRECTORS.

ROBERT, EARL of KINNOULL, President.

JAMES BONAR, Esq. Deputy Solicitor of Excise.

JOHN GLOAG of Chapleton, Esq. Merchant in Edinburgh.

The Rev. Mr THOMAS SNELL JONES, Minister of Lady
Glenorchy's Chapel, Edinburgh.

ALEX. BONAR, Esq. Banker in Edinburgh.

JAMES ROBERTSON, Esq. Clerk to the Signet.

The Rev. Mr WILLIAM SIMPSON, one of the ministers
of Edinburgh.

Sir JAMES COLQUHOUN of Lufs, Baronet.

WILLIAM KERR, Esq. Secretary to the General Post-
Office, Edinburgh.

The Rev. Mr WALTER BUCHANAN, one of the Ministers
of Canongate.

The Rev. THOMAS DAVIDSON of Muirhouse, D. D. one
of the Ministers of Edinburgh.

DAVID REID, Esq. one of the Commissioners of his
Majesty's Customs, Edinburgh.

The Rev. Mr WILLIAM PAUL, one of the Ministers of
St Cuthberts, or West Kirk,

WILLIAM

WILLIAM MACDONALD of St Martin's, Esq. Clerk to the Signet.

JOHN TAITT junior, Esq. Clerk to the Signet.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY.

The Rev. JOHN KEMP, D. D. one of the Ministers of Edinburgh, Secretary.

ALEX. DUNCAN, Esq. Clerk to the Signet, Treasurer.

JOHN DICKSON, Esq. Advocate, Comptroller.

HORATIUS CANNAN, Esq. Clerk to the Signet, Accountant.

ARCH. LUNDIE, Esq. Clerk to the Signet, Bookholder.

JOHN PITCAIRN, Esq. Merchant in Edinburgh, Librarian.

Mr JAMES KNOX, Writer in Edinburgh, Clerk.

Mungo Watson, Officer.

Annual, and other Benefactions, are received by

The Secretary, Treasurer, or any of the principal Officers of the Society in Edinburgh.

In London,

By THOMAS COUTTS, Esq. Banker in the Strand.

HENRY HUNTER, D. D. Bethnal Green Road, Hoxton,
Secretary to the Corresponding Board in London.

William Mackintosh of St. Martin, Esq. Clerk
to the Society
John Taitt Jones, Esq. Clerk to the Society

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

The Rev. John Kew, Dr. D. one of the Ministers
Edinburgh, Secretary
Alex. Duncan, Esq. Clerk to the Society
John Dickson, Esq. Advocate
Hon. James Cairns, Esq. Clerk to the Society

James Lindsay, Esq. Clerk to the Society
John Fitch, Esq.



Mr. James Kew
George Watson, Esq.

FORM OF A BEQUEST OR LEGACY.

Item, I give and bequeath the sum of
to The Society in
Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge,
 to be applied, either to the general objects
 of the Institution, or to such particular pur-
 poses, consistent with these objects, as the
 Donor may think proper.

N. B. Those who may be pleased to fa-
 vour this Society with bequests or legacies,
 are entreated to express their intention in
 the very words above directed, and parti-
 cularly to take care that the words *in Scot-*
land be not omitted.

* * *The Public are requested to take notice, that the*
Hall and Office of the Society, are in that Close,
now styled, SOCIETY-CLOSE, in the Nether-Bow, Edin-
burgh. And the hours for transacting business with the
Society, are from ELEVEN forenoon, to ONE o'clock after-
noon, every lawful day.

FORM OF A REMITTANCE OF PAYMENT

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that the sum of
 £1000 (one thousand pounds) has been paid to the
 order of the Treasurer of the British Association
 for the advancement of Science, in full of the
 subscription of the undersigned to the Association
 for the year 1861.

Witness my hand and seal this 1st day of January
 1861.

THE SECRETARY OF THE ASSOCIATION

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE